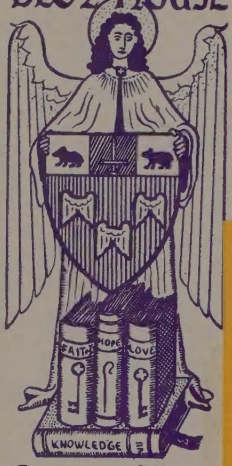
School of Theology at Claremont
1001 1354025

...THE MORE... ABUNDANT LIFE

LENTEN READINGS

Selected Chiefly from
Unpublished Manuscripts
of the
Rt. Rev. PHILLIPS BROOKS
D.D.

BLOY HOUSE



Diocesan Library

THEOLOGICAL STUDY AND
RETREAT CENTER + +

GIVEN BY

IN MEMORY OF

Theology Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

THE MORE ABUNDANT LIFE

BV
85
B72

LENTEN READINGS

SELECTED CHIEFLY FROM UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS
OF THE

RT. REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D.D. 1835-1893

Late Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts

By W. M. L. Jay

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY
31 West Twenty-third Street
1910

COPYRIGHT
E. P. DUTTON & CO.
1897

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

PREFACE.

THE observance of Lent as a season of spiritual awakening and refreshment, is steadily growing in favor with the Christian world. This crowded and complex modern life really demands a yearly period of comparative quietude, wherein the life of the soul —too often thrust aside and starved in the ordinary rush of business or pleasure—may come to the front, to be fostered and fed, and strengthened for whatever of trial or sorrow it must encounter as its days go on. Bishop Phillips Brooks, by largeness of sympathy and fineness of insight, is well fitted to guide us into this quiet, penitential season. No one is less open than he to the charge of formalism, yet no one has made a more earnest plea for the due observance of Lent than that which is chosen for the Ash-Wednesday Reading in this book. It is no narrow asceticism to which he invites us, but a "more abundant life," not of the flesh but of the spirit, to be lived in loving dependence upon the Saviour, in loving commemoration of the suffering and death

which He endured in order that all who believe on Him might have life.

The compilation, chiefly from unpublished manuscripts, has been a labor of love. I humbly hope that it may help some of us to find or keep the "way of life" through earthly Lents to the heavenly Easter.

W. M. L. JAY.

THE MORE ABUNDANT LIFE.

Ash-Wednesday.

Turn ye even unto me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful.—JOEL, ii., 12, 13.

When ye fast be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance. . . . That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret.—MATT., vi., 16, 18.

ALL bodily discipline, all voluntary abstinence from pleasure of whatever sort, must be of value either as a symbol of something or as a means of something. This, then, is the philosophy of fasting: it expresses repentance, and it uncovers the life to God. "Come down, my pride; stand back, my passions; for I am wicked, and I wait for God to bless me"; that is what the fasting man says. You see what I mean by fasting. It is the voluntary disuse of anything innocent in itself, with a view to

spiritual culture. It does not apply to food alone. It applies to everything which a man may desire.

Let us think first about the value of fasting as a symbol. It is the characteristic of a symbolic action that it increases and nourishes the feeling to which it corresponds. Laughter is the symbol of joy, but as you laugh your laughter reacts upon the joy and heightens it. Tears are the sign of sorrow, but they feed the sorrow out of which they flow. . . . And so it is no artificial thing, nothing unreal or unnatural, when the soul, sorry for its sins, ashamed of its poor bad life, lets its shame utter itself in signs of humiliation, and finds in quick and sure reaction the shame which it expresses deepened and strengthened through the utterance which expresses it. . . .

Then let us pass to the second value of fasting, its value directly as a means. The more we watch the lives of men, the more we see that one of the reasons why men are not occupied with great thoughts and interests is the way in which their lives are over-filled with little things. It is not that you despise the highest hopes and interests of your immortal nature that you neglect them so; it is mainly that your passions crowd so thick about you that you are entirely occupied with them. It is no untrue picture of the lives of many of us if we imag-

ine ourselves, that is, our wills, standing in the centre; and close about each central figure, about each man's self, a crowd of clamorous passions and eager lusts; while away outside of them there wait, in larger circle, the higher claimants of our time and powers—culture and truth and charity and religion, with all their train. . . . The man sometimes puts out his hand, parts and pushes aside this clamorous crowd, these physical appetites, these secular ambitions. He says to them, "Stand back; and, at least for a few moments, let me hear what culture and truth and charity and religion have to say to my soul." Then up through the emptiness that he has made by pushing these clamorers back, there pours the rich company of higher thoughts and interests, and they gather for a time around the soul which belongs to them, but from which they have been shut away. . . . There is no nobler sight anywhere than to behold a man thus quietly and resolutely put aside the lower that the higher may come in to him.

Every now and then a conscience, among the men and women who live easy, thoughtless lives, is stirred, and someone looks up anxiously, and says, "Is this wrong? Is it wicked to do this?" And when they get their answer, "No, certainly not

wicked," then they go back, and give their whole lives up to doing their innocent little piece of uselessness again. Ah! the question is not whether that is wicked, whether God will punish you for doing that; the question is whether that thing is keeping other and better things away from you; whether behind its little bulk the vast privilege and dignity of duty is hid from you; whether it stands between God and your soul. If it does, then it is an offence to you, and though it be your right hand or your right eye, cut it off, pluck it out, and cast it from you. To put aside everything that hinders the highest from coming to us, and then to call to us that highest which—nay, *Who* is always waiting to come,—fasting and prayer,—this, as the habit and tenor of a life, is noble. As an occasional effort even, if it is real and earnest, it makes the soul freer for the future. A short special communion with the unseen and eternal prevents the soul from ever being again so completely the slave of the things of sense and time.

What, then, is Lent? Ah, if our souls are sinful and are shut too close by many worldlinesses against that Lord who is their Life and their Saviour, what do we need? Let us have the symbols which belong to sin and to repentance. Let us, at least for a few

weeks among the many weeks of life, proclaim by soberness and quietude of life that we know our responsibility, and how often we have been false to it. Let us not sweep through the whole year in buoyant exultation, as if there were no shame upon us, nothing to repent of, nothing for us to fear. By some small symbols let us bear witness that we know something of the solemnity of living, the dreadfulness of sin, the struggle of repentance. Our symbols may be very feeble; our sackcloth may be lined with silk and our ashes scented with the juice of roses; but let us do *something* that shall break the mere monotony of complacent living, which seems to be forever saying over to itself that there is no such thing as sin, that to live is light and easy work. Perhaps the symbol may strike in and deepen the solemnity which it expresses. Perhaps as we tell God of what little sorrow for our sins we have, our sorrow for our sins may be increased; and while we stand there in His presence the fasting may gather a truer reality of repentance behind it.

And let those symbols be likewise the means of opening our souls to Christ. For a few weeks let those obtrusive worldlinesses which block the doors of our hearts stand back; and let the way be clear, that He who longs to enter in and help us may come

and meet no obstacle. This is our Lenten task. "If any man will hear My voice and open unto Me, I will come in and sup with him," says Jesus. To still the clatter and tumult a little, so that we may hear His voice, and to open the door by prayer—that is the privilege and duty of these coming weeks.

May God be with us during this Lent! May we be with God! May there be much of the fasting which our Father loves, much penitence for sin, and much opening of long-shut doors to Christ! O my dear friends, let us enter into it with earnestness, that we may come out of it with joy!

Whoso the Holy Place would enter in
Must pray and fast: must pray for steadfast grace
To turn from all that hides the Father's face;
Must fast from every sweet that tends to sin.

O God, whose blessed Son became obedient to the law for man, and underwent hunger and thirst in doing Thy will and fulfilling all righteousness, give me grace in all patience and temperance so to bear and forbear, that my flesh being subdued to the spirit, I may ever obey Thy holy guidance and control, in all righteousness, purity and soberness; Who art our Father and our King, world without end. Amen.

Thursday after Ash-Wednesday.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you.—Is., lix., 1, 2.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.—Ps., lxvi., 18.

THE belief that God will hear our petitions and confidences lies deeper in our souls than we imagine. . . . And so we want to know when it is that God will not hear. The hindrance must be in the man—that we are sure of. . . . It is not anything in God. Here is the great love of the Father. Here is the Heart that broods over His children with unutterable love. How alert that divine ear is to listen, none of us can know. It does not need a formal prayer; the most stumbling and broken cry—a sigh, a whisper, anything that tells the heart's loneliness and need and penitence—can find its way to Him. It cannot possibly escape Him, any more than the humblest flower,

lying close to the ground, can escape the all-seeking, all-finding mercy of the sunlight. Nay, not so much as a whisper nor a sigh is needed. A thought, a wish, He hears it; a longing to be better, a longing to be free, the feeblest flutter of a soul's love, His soul discovers. His ear is never heavy, that it cannot hear. If any of us seem to cry and not be heard, the fault is in our cry, and not in Him: let us believe that always, O my friends!

But still, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." What strikes us in the condition which David describes is its deliberateness. It is not something into which a man may fall, out of weakness, and almost without knowing it. To "regard iniquity" is a voluntary act. . . . The man or woman chooses the sin, and chooses to cling to it. The deliberateness may cloak itself and try to pass for a necessity. You may lay the blame on circumstance, on temperament, on education, on almost anything; but all the time down at the bottom of your heart, in the moment when you are sincerely honest, you know which are the sins you choose, which are the sins to which you open the gate. You can tell them by a certain confidence in their step as they enter and walk through the streets

of your heart; they are different from those that have climbed in over the unguarded wall.

There is indeed something in the most obstinate and wilful soul that God can hear. There is no man so far from God, so utterly indifferent, that God does not hear the appeal of his indifference itself calling out to Him for pity and awakening. But this is not the true communion of the soul with God. That communion is broken by a man's deliberate choice and preference of sin, as it is not by his feebleness and passionate yielding to temptation. . . . In the one case, you have the feeble soul—wofully feeble—falling headlong into sin, and yet hating its sin and crying out for escape; and in the other, the steady, deliberate transgressor looking sin in the face and choosing it—deliberately wicked, regarding iniquity in his heart. That makes the difference. Therefore it is that Jesus stoops and gathers up the Magdalen's wretched life, that He draws the publican into His spiritual life and makes an Apostle of him, that he chooses St. Peter for His most trusted servant, and that He sweeps Sadducees and Pharisees indignantly away.

We are God's children. We are made for God. Between His nature and our nature there is an essential, everlasting union. He will enter into

communion with any soul that will receive Him. Only sin has the power to break the sympathy between the child and the Father, and send a sorrow to the Father's heart, a sorrow as of bereavement of His best-beloved, and to send the child out into the desolateness of an orphaned life.

Do you not know what I am trying to describe so feebly? Have you never felt sure that sin was harming you not merely by what it made you *do*, but by what it made you *lose?* There was a life with God, of which men told, of which something in your own heart assured you of the possibility and the beauty, from which you knew you were shut out, not because of any unwillingness of God, but simply because of the life you were living.

Years and years ago the whole story was told by Jesus in the parable of the Prodigal Son. He never was turned out of his father's house. A thousand slips and faults of his boyhood did not separate him from his father so long as his *heart* was true and loyal. Only when he rebelled and went away, his father could not follow him, except with love. Only as long as he stayed away, his father, however much he loved him, could not be with him. But the moment he returned, the house was opened, the feast was spread, the communion was reëstab-

lished. "While he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." There is no more to tell than that. A thousand sermons, a thousand Lents, could tell no more. God *will* hear as soon as He *can* hear. It is man's obstinacy, not God's reluctance, that keeps back the mercy.

There are two certainties which come from all of this. They are the truths you need for Lent. First: if you are not wilful, God will hear you. It is deliberate sin, a sin that hugs itself and is not willing to give itself up, that shuts the door of spiritual life, and hides the Saviour from the soul. If you are sure (and of this much you may be sure) that *this* is not in you, if you are sure that, weak as you are, you still do not love your sin, but hate it, you do not cling to it but long to get away from it; then you may look up with the fullest confidence to a hearing God. Second: that if whatever difficulty lies between our souls and God comes out of our wills, then it is in the power of those wills to break through the difficulty and find God where He waits behind it. If we can seek death, we can also seek life. There is no man so bad but the same power of self-will that chose his badness might also have chosen goodness,—nay, may choose it still. The gate stands open wide. Repentance certainly

will find forgiveness. A turning to God will surely find Him waiting. "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Let us pray: "So give now unto us who ask; let us who seek, find; open the gate to us who knock."

Thus day and night they are pressing nigh,
With tears and sighs, to the heavenly Gate,
Where the Watchman stands in His majesty,
With a patience that never has said, "Too late."

Let the sorrowful children of want and sin
Draw near to the Gate, whence none depart;
Let the nations arise and enter in,
For the Lord is willing, with all His heart.

Lord Jesus, Who camest from heaven to earth to call us, wean us from earth that we may ascend to Thee in heaven. Thou leftest heaven for love of us: forbid it that we should not leave anything or everything for love of Thee. Thou sinless camest into contact with sin for us; enable us for love of Thee to repent and sin no more. Amen.

Friday after Ash-Wednesday.

And He said unto them, "Have ye not heard what David did when he was an-hungred; . . . how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?" —MATT., xii., 3, 4.

A THOUSAND years, and more, had passed after the bright morning when David came up to the Temple-gate at Nob, and Jesus Christ found use for the old story to illustrate what He wanted His disciples to understand in their bewilderment. They had taken the ears of corn out of the cornfield on the Sabbath day, which were to the ears of corn which rustled carelessly in the wind on other days of the week what the loaves of shew-bread were to the loaves sold by the bakers in the shops, and Jesus justified them; He reached back into the past, and justified David a thousand years before. He at least would have nothing too sacred for its use. To Him at least the more sacred anything was, the more fit and ready should it be to minister

to man's most common need. . . . It was for the honor of the shew-bread that David insisted that it should not fail of its purpose, and lie useless on its golden table while a man was standing hungry at the door. It was for the honor of the Sabbath that Jesus rebuked that false care for its dignity which would not rob the wheat-stalks on this one day of the purpose of their life.

It is the portion and duty of every man who knows himself to be the child of God to claim the highest and divinest of his Father's helps for all his most immediate and ordinary needs. What a great thing life would become if we did that ! . . . You get discouraged. The task of the hour seems too heavy. That awful blight of sordidness falls on everything, and makes nothing seem worth while. The whole degenerates into a terrible machine. The dust and clatter fill the air with tumult and oppression. And men pity you. They see the weariness and sadness in your face; they try to cheer you up; they offer you distractions. They dole out to you bits of philosophy. . . . And all the time there lies the shew-bread,—there on its golden table lies the sacred food which we think we must not touch for common wants like these ! There are the truths which we believe were made to

feed, like precious fragrant oils, the flames of the most ecstatic ambitions and the great attempts of inspired sanity, the supreme efforts of the supremest moments of men's lives. They are the truths that we are *all* of us God's children; that every soul is made for purity and has no right to sin; that no soul can do its duty *anywhere* without a thrill of richer life running through all the world. These are the shew-bread truths. What have our poor depressions and discouragements and cowardices and failures, our little tasks and commonplace existences to do with truths like these! We may starve, but we must not touch the shew-bread; it is not lawful for us, but only for the priests!

O my dear friends, when, with an instinct as true as David's, we can let our souls say, "We *have* a right, the least need of the least child of God has a right to the very sacredest and highest of his Father's truth; my little tasks, the little tasks even of my little life, claim the divinest inspirations which the martyrdoms and the crusades of the most splendid souls require,"—the moment we are bold enough for that, the shew-bread almost leaps from the table to our hungry life, and the true Priest of God, Christ Himself, presses it into our hands.

I call Christ the Priest, and so He is, but He is

also the very Shew-bread of Humanity Himself. And has not the wonder of His offered presence in the world been this,—that He has wakened the David-instinct in countless souls? He has made common men feel that their common hunger gave them a true claim on Him, a claim which He would own. No Christ for priests and heroes only has He been, but rather a Christ who made a possible hero or priest of every man; and taught the world that no struggle after righteousness was so obscure, and no search after truth was so blind and stumbling, that it might not call on the Eternal Righteousness and the Eternal Truth, and be sure that they would hear the cry. *All* hunger knows its right to the Bread of Life. . . .

There are the higher and the lower realms of life; —alas for us if we deny the difference between the hunger of the body and the hunger of the soul, and let ourselves think, or teach others to think, that the messages and impartations of God which come through the one have the same richness and blessedness with those which come through the other. But, notwithstanding this is so,—nay, all the more *because* it is so,—we need to recognize and say that the lower life is God's, and that He cares for it, and that He uses it as truly as the higher. . . .

When you come down from the summits, you do not come away from God. There is no task of life in which you do not need Him. The Nation is as truly His as the Church. The work-bench needs His light as truly as the cloister. . . . The temples will not be less but more sacred when the sacredness of the shop and field are cordially and thankfully acknowledged. The shew-bread will be more holy when it has proved that it is not too holy to feed the hunger of a hungry man. The highest reaches of religious speculation and religious rapture will reach higher still when religion has been claimed by the commonest duties and the most sordid sufferings of life as their only strength and help.

What is the issue of it all for us? God hasten the day when the world shall freely use the divinest powers for its commonest tasks! When that day comes, the Millennium is here. The world waits for that day. But *we* need not wait. For each of us that day may come now. Do not delay until some need worthy of God shall seem to make it possible for you to come to Him! *All needs need Him.* Come with the needs you have. Let them claim Him. Through His supply of them He will awaken higher needs; and so, at last, little by little, He will fulfil you with Himself.

The little sharp vexations,
And the briars that catch and fret,
Why not take all to the Helper
Who has never failed us yet?
Tell Him about the heartaches,
And tell Him the longings, too;
Tell Him the baffled purpose,
When we scarce know what to do.
Then, leaving all our weakness
With the One divinely strong,
Forget that we bore the burden,
And carry away the song.

O Lord our only Saviour, we cannot bear any burden worthily without Thee; upbear us under them all. We look without seeing unless Thou purge our sight; grant us sight. Nothing can we do unless Thou prosper us; oh, prosper Thou our handiwork. We are weak; out of weakness make us strong. We believe; help Thou our unbelief. We hope; let us not be disappointed of our hope. We love; grant us to love much, to love all, and most of all to love Thee. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

Saturday after Ash-Wednesday.

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.—MATT., xii., 35.

For whosoever hath to him shall be given; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have.—LUKE, viii., 18.

THE idea that, out of the mass of influences about us the good character appropriates the elements which belong to it so that it becomes even better, and the bad character appropriates its own elements and becomes even worse,—that seems to me to be one of the most profoundly impressive declarations of what essentially different things the good and evil are. I take two seeds which look so much alike that only the skilled eye can tell the difference between; I plant them side by side in the same soil; immediately each of them sends out its summons; each demands of the ground the elements of growth which its peculiar nature craves. The earth hears and acknowledges the summons, and

renders up to each what it demands. So two men who seem just alike are set down in the same city; instantly to one there fly all the influences of good, to the other there gather all the powers of evil, that pervade that city's life. Or into a man's life is dropped a purpose; that purpose instantly declares its character by the way in which it divides the forces of his life. If it is good, it calls all that is good within him or around him to its aid. All that is noble gives its strength willingly to this new, feeble plan; all that is sluggish, base, selfish, in his nature or his circumstances, sets itself against his desire. It is in such discriminations that the essential differences of the qualities of the good and bad display themselves. In the least atom of good there lies a power to attract goodness and repel wickedness. In the least atom of wickedness there lies a power to repel the good and attract the bad. That is the *qualitative* power of moral natures. Ah, when we think how everywhere we are imposed upon by *quantity*, do we not need, do we not welcome, this strong statement that the real power of things lies in their qualities, in what they really are whether there be much of them or little ?

We need to learn, when we hear Christ insisting on repentance, on love for Himself, on love for

fellow-man, on devoted work, that His desire is, first of all and deepest of all, for the *qualities* of those things. He wants a real repentance, a real love, a real devotion. If He sees reality, we can well understand how He can be infinitely patient with littleness. For where He stands eternity is all in sight; He sees forever; He knows through what summer of cloudless sunshine the least grace will have time to ripen to the richest. He knows in what rich fields the seed will find eternal lodgment. So there is time enough, if only the seed is real. If it is not real, eternity is not long enough nor heaven rich enough to bring it to anything.

How impressive this is in the story of Christ's earthly life! How patient He was with imperfection! How intolerant of unreality! He could wait for a publican while he unsnarled himself out of the meshes of his low vocation, but He cut with a word like a sword through the solemn trifling of the Pharisees. He never was impatient with His disciples. Their graces were very small, but they were real. Eternity was long, and He could wait till the graces which He saw to be real opened into all the possibility which He discerned in them, till the Peter who paraded his genuine but feeble resolution of devotion at the Supper grew to be the

Peter who could die for Him at Rome, and live with Him in some high doing of His will in heaven.

It is good for us if we can treat ourselves as our Lord treats us. Try to find out if your repentance for sin is real—a genuine sorrow for a wrong life. If it is, no matter if it falls short of the complete contrition which you picture to yourself, still keep it, hold it fast; do not let it slip away and drop back into the placid content which you felt before you were penitent at all. So with your love to your Saviour; do not throw it away because it is not that large-winged devotion which soars up into the very sunshine of His closest Company. Keep it. Feed it on all you know of Him. Never trifle with it, or surround it with any unreality of profession, merely to try to make it seem larger than it is. Reverence it, not because it is great enough to be worthy of Him, but because for such a being as you are to love such a Being as He is at all, is a sublime act—the glorification of your nature and the promise of infinite growth.

In the truth which Jesus taught, then, in the proverb which was so often on His lips, there still lies the warning and the inspiration that He put there. It is the truth of a live world, a world so full of life that into it nothing can fall without par-

taking of its life,—a world that makes the good better and the bad worse always.

If the world is making us worse, then not to change the world but to be changed ourselves is what we need. We must be regenerate by Christ, and then the world shall become His school-room, by all its ministries bringing us more and more perfectly to Him. May He give us His new life, that the world may become new to us!

Unto him that hath Thou givest
  Ever more abundantly.
Lord, I live because Thou livest,
  Therefore give new life to me;
Therefore speed me in the race;
Therefore let me grow in grace.

Let me grow by sun and shower,
  Every moment water me;
Make me really hour by hour
  More and more conformed to Thee,
That Thy loving eye may trace,
Day by day, my growth in grace.

Let me then be always growing,
  Never, never standing still;
Listening, learning, better knowing
  Thee and Thy most gracious will.
Till I reach Thy Holy Place,
Daily let me grow in grace.

O Gracious God, Who maketh all things to work together for the good of them that love Thee, grant me such love to Thee that I may find the good in all Thy gifts and creatures, and use all to Thy glory; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Sunday in Lent.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.—MATT., iv., 1.

For we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are.—HEB., iv., 15.

NO adoption of any strict rule of life, no separation of ourselves from a certain region of dangerous occupations, sets us free from the persecution of temptation. We are tempted to sin everywhere. It is pathetic, almost terrible, to think how long this has been going on. Through all these weary years which it tires us to think of, they have been so many; through all these monotonous generations that we hear flowing on endlessly through the cavernous depths of history, as one listens to a stream dropping down monotonously forever underground; through all the years and generations of human life, men have been tempted,—not one that ever lived did not meet this persistent, intrusive enticement to sin.

And now, what effect has this temptation of our Lord upon this strange, universal experience of men? The man who has seen Christ will not be found explaining temptation away. He will not delude himself with vain hopes of living a smooth, untempted life. He will read in the temptation of the Perfect Life that that is impossible forever for any man. When he is depressed and hungry and exhausted, he will look for the devil as his Lord did; and when he sees him coming, when he hears his words and feels the desire of sin stirring in his heart, he will not say, "Oh, this is nothing but one stage of my growth!"—he will recognize the old enemy of his Master coming for the old battle, and pray for his Master's strength in the hour of terrible, inevitable struggle.

But . . . shall men go on courting temptations, finding them out, and running into them, so that they may come out glorious and strong? Look at Christ's temptation. There is one phrase that lights up the whole story,—Christ was "led up *of the Spirit* to be tempted of the devil." He had a certain work to do. That work was not His own, but was His Father's. His Father's Spirit guided Him, and told Him how to do it. For some reason (who but that Spirit can say wholly what?) it was

necessary that He should meet the devil in the wilderness. Therefore the Spirit led Him there, and, filled with the Spirit all the time that He was there, He came down safe and glorious. We too have a work, a duty. Our Father gives it to us as His Father gave His to Jesus. In doing our duty the Spirit of our Father may often lead us into temptation, but if He really leads us there He will protect us there. If He does not lead us, if we go of our own self-will, we have no pledge of His protection. We leave at the door the Guide whose company is safety.

The first temptation is told thus: "And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." . . . And there was the hunger gnawing all the while and saying "Amen" to the devil's words. . . .

Do you not see what the temptation was and what it is forever? O my dear friend, God made these things, and made you to live by them, but not by them alone. Go on; gather the joy out of the earth and sky, out of the bread He gives you power to win, out of the water that He made to gush at

your feet; only, when the time comes—as it is sure to come some time, as perhaps it is to come now—when, in order to speak some word out of His mouth to you, some word of duty or charity or holiness, He takes these things away, and you are tempted to shut your ears to His word in order that you may keep these pleasant things,—then you are just where Jesus was—the devil is at your ear. May God help you to see just what Jesus saw—what He said afterward, perhaps remembering His own temptation: "The life is more than meat." May he help you to say, "No! Nothing—not even His gifts—shall blind or deafen me to Him. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word out of the mouth of God"—the blessed sacrifice of sense to spirit.

Do we know anything about [the second] temptation? . . . If ever, in any way, the thought of spiritual privilege has tried to draw us away from the everlasting, central thought of duty, the absolute necessity of faithfulness and watchfulness; if ever, in order to realize God more completely, you have been tempted to go out of the path of simple duty where He has set you,—it has been Christ's temptation over again.

And was it [the third] a temptation? Did Jesus

want those kingdoms and their glory? Surely He did. He had come to win them, He had come to purchase them with His own precious blood. He stood with His heart full of blessings and the world would not take them. He wanted that world that He might pour His blessings in and upon it. . . . If you have ever had a friend whom with the purest sympathy and love you longed to bless and help, who shut himself against you; and if the time has come when you have seen, or thought you have seen, just how, by one wrong act, by one concession to his standards, by one compliance, you could get the access to him that you wanted; if then all your love for him has poured in its influence to make you do that wrong thing, then you know of what sort this last temptation was. How it touched Jesus to the quick we can see in the intensity of the indignation with which He turned against it. "Get thee hence, Satan!" He cries out. This temptation had come nearer to His heart than any of the others.

There will come a world where there will be no temptation—a garden with no serpent, a city with no sin. The harvest day will come and the wheat will be gathered safe into the Master's barn. It will be very sweet and glorious. Our tired hearts rest on the promises with peaceful delight. But that

time is not yet. Here are our tempted lives; and here, right in the midst of us, stands our tempted Saviour. If we are men, we shall meet temptation as He met it, in the strength of the God who is the Father, of whom all men are children. Every temptation that attacks us attacked Him and was conquered. We are fighting a defeated enemy. We are struggling for a victory which is already won. That may be our strength and assurance as we recall, whenever our struggle becomes hottest and most trying, the wonderful and blessed day when Jesus was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

Distrust thyself, but trust His strength,
In Him thou shalt be strong;
His weakest ones may learn at length
A daily triumph-song.
Distrust thyself, but trust alone
In Him, for all, for ever!
And joyously thy heart shall own
That Jesus faileth never.

O God, Who has set us our work to do in life, give us grace to do it in and for Thee. Grant that no temptation of this present evil world may lead us to forget that Thee, and Thee only, we must serve in all things; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday after the First Sunday.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—JOHN, x., 10.

AMONG all the words of Jesus, I do not know where we shall find larger words than these. They are very primitive and fundamental. They go back to the very beginning and purpose of His presence on the earth. "What art Thou here for, O wonderful, mysterious, bewildering Christ?" "I am here that men may have life more and more abundantly." Could words go farther back than that? Behind all special things which He wanted men to do and be, behind all the great lessons which He wanted men to learn, He wanted men, first of all, to *live*. . . . It is deficient vitality, not excessive vitality, which makes the mischief and trouble of the world. . . . Do we not know that there are certain persons in the world whose recognizable purpose and office it is to increase the amount of this vitality of life in the regions where they have

been set? In every circle or community where you have ever lived has there not been some man whom you knew as a life-giver? He may or may not have been a learned man who gave definite instruction, but he increased vitality. He caused men to do their best. He quickened languid natures. He made the streams run full. He called the dead to life. Such men are everywhere. That which makes them memorable is that beside or through their special faculty, they have this universal, elemental power,—they create *condition* in other men. You can say nothing more of such a man than this—he is the life-giver. He comes and things have life.

When we have realized such a man as that, and seen just what he is in the great world, we have come where we can understand Christ and see just what was the meaning of His self-description. Sometimes people count up Christ's acts and stand with the little group of jewels in their open hands, looking at them with something like puzzled wonder, and saying, "Is this, then, all that He did?" Other people gather Christ's words together, and feel through all their beauty a bewildering sense that they do not fully account for the marvellous power of His life. But sometimes there comes a

truer apprehension. The things He did, the things He said, were only signs and indications of what He *was*. He was not primarily the Deed-Doer or the Word-Sayer; He was the Life-Giver. He made men live. Wherever He went He brought vitality. Both in the days of His incarnation and in the long years of His power which have followed since He vanished from men's sight, His work has been to create the conditions in which all sorts of men should *live*. He hated death. He hates death everywhere. He took men in Jerusalem and poured in behind their torpid faculties the fiery vitality that stung them all to life. This was His redemption of mankind. Whatever else came from His words and actions, everywhere this was true,—*men lived by Him*. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," was His cry of keen momentary disappointment. "He that eateth me the same shall live by me," was His consummate definition of His power. At the head of all life-givers stands the life-giving Son of Man.

And see how perfectly clear is His conception of the *way* in which He is to give life to men, to complete the vitality of the world. It is not by stirring up the powers of each individual, as if each carried his vitality lodged within himself, and could live as

an independent unit of life. There is a great Reservoir and Source of life with which each being is to be brought into contact, into which each being is to be bound, so that Its vitality can be poured through the channels of the bound, the related, the consecrated, the religious being. This is Christ's splendid doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. He realized it first in Himself. He was the Son of God. His life was God's life. What He would do for every man was to set that man's nature into the Divine Nature so that the Divine Life could live in it. He would put the star into the system; He would put the tree into the soil;—nay, His own figure alone tells the story,—"No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"—so He is always saying.

The necessity of life!—how all the cautious theories deny that principle. "Too much life is dangerous,"—so runs the conscious or unconscious thought of hosts of frightened men. "Let life be limited. You must not think too much; you must not act too venturously; safety lies in the limitation of vitality." Against this comes the calm word of Jesus. "Nay, live your fullest. The full life is the only safe life. Danger comes not by excess, but by defect of vitality. But you live fully only

when you live as a part, not as a whole. To try to live as a whole is to limit and starve your life. . . . Set your mind close to the Eternal Unity of truth, and hold it there until the two grow together and the truth that is universal and eternal, the truth that is God, flows into you, and you live by it." That is Christ's urgency of faith which is also hope and love. . . . Life is not life, freedom is not freedom, unless the live thing is set in the ground of its true nourishment, and keeps open the connection with the Eternal Source of its strength. Man is not living except as he lives in God.

Everything best which comes into the world as it is now, opens some glimpse of that complete world which shall be, . . . of the new heavens and the new earth which are to be radiant and strong with the vitality which is by obedience; where peace and power and growth shall know no disturbance and no hindrance. What is it but the sight which the Apostle saw?—the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: "And there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of *Life*."

A lovely City in a lovely land,
Whose citizens are lovely, and whose King
Is Very Love; to Whom all angels sing;
To Whom all saints sing crowned, their sacred band
Saluting Love with palm-branch in their hand . . .
A bower of roses is not half so sweet,
A cave of diamonds doth not glitter so,
Nor Lebanon is fruitful set thereby:
And thither thou, beloved, and thither I
May set our heart and set our face, and go
Faint yet pursuing home on tireless feet.

Glory to God for all His goodness, in all things, and to all men, everywhere, and forever.

Glory to Him from the perfect and unspotted dwellers in heavenly light; glory to Him, in our measure, from us unworthy and humble, sitting under their feet.

Holy, Holy, Holy, unsearchable in eternity, Father of all men, and Life-Giver forever.

O Lord of Life and Love, take hold of us with unseen fingers, till we stretch forward all together to life everlasting. Amen.

Tuesday after the First Sunday.

He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.—JOHN, xi., 25.

THE life which Christ gives is the awakening and inspiring of every part of our nature through the power of Christ, made our power by obedient love. Love, then, for Him, is the essence of the life He gives. "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet he shall live,"—*that* He promises of this life as well as of the next. It is all one with Him. And the power of belief is love. What then? Love is of necessity a gradual and growing thing, and the love of the Infinite is an infinite thing. If the life that Christ gives were something else than what it is, it might perhaps be given all in an instant, and be at once complete. The fetters are struck off of a prisoner's limbs, and with the hammer's blow he is completely free. The doors of a banquet chamber are flung open, and with one burst of light and music the guest is entirely welcome. But a transforming Love, that takes our nature and spreads it

through the very substance of another nature—*that* cannot be an instantaneous thing. It may begin in an instant,—one look into the face of Jesus and the love, at that first sight, may start, and begin to send His life into our deadness. But as infinite as what He has to give, must be our reception of it. How the soul glories in this truth when it has learned it! It is reconciled to its manifest imperfections while it yet dares to aspire to absolute perfectness. It finds itself all full of sin, and yet dares to call itself a child of God. It lies as the pebble lies on the shore, and feels in the wave that wets it now only the promise and potency of the unmeasured ocean whose murmur it hears stretching back into infinity. The soul which knows that it loves Christ hears all Christ's nature promising Itself to it just as fast and just as fully as it can receive it. It is an endless life.

The only qualification and limit to this must be in man's ability to receive the life of Christ. But the wish of Christ to give Himself to man involves also the nature of the man to whom He gives Himself. "I am come that they might have life," He said. That life was His life; He felt it in Himself, felt its infinity. And as He came, He saw the men that He was coming to; He saw all that was base about them, saw how superficial and how shallow

they were. He saw them filled with sin through the love of sin, and yet He said, "I am coming to give them Myself through the love of Me, to give them Myself deeper and deeper, little by little, until they shall have received Me perfectly." Look what a faith in the possibilities of human nature the Incarnation implied! Just when man was most bitterly despairing of himself, Christ came with His bewildering promise of the divine life for man. Just when men seemed to be proving how fertile their human nature could be in evil, Christ came and claimed that the same fertility might overrun with harvests of life instead of harvests of death,—that a world which could be bad could also be infinitely good.

The faith of Christ in man—that is what is written in the Incarnation! The faith of Christ in you or me—that is what is written in the visit of Christ to you or me when, coming and standing directly across our path of wickedness and death, He says to us calmly and surely, "I am come that you might have life, the life of holiness which is by love of Me." Christ sees a man in sin, and says, "Every power which that man sins with he might be holy with. Every faculty he serves the devil with, he might serve Me with. With all the richness with

which he is wicked he might be good. I will go and put Myself into his life, and its vigorous vitality, taking hold of Me, a little at first, shall possess Me more abundantly till I have transformed it to Myself." Christ's call to a man to be converted is the sublimest testimony to the essential capacity of human life. And yet men talk as if the great revelation of the Gospel were how wicked man is, and not how good he may become! The Gospel has nothing to do with sin except to forgive it, and to find in its luxuriance the promise of what luxuriant growth goodness might come to in that same human nature. The farmer has nothing to do with the weeds except to pluck them out and to believe that his wheat will grow more richly in ground that could make the weeds so rich. When will men set their hearts free to believe that Jesus meant exactly what He said when He stood in the temple, in His Passion Week, and cried, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world?"

Not to judge you, but to save you, does Christ come now, O my dear friend! You have heard of Him all your life. You have seen Him far away. Oh, if to-day He could meet you where you could not escape Him, and in the power of His meekness compel you to face Him! You are afraid, for you

have heard that He is terrible in His hatred of sin; but the first words that He says are, "I am come not to judge you, but to save you." And the offer of salvation makes you feel your sin far more keenly than any threat of punishment could. He goes on, "I am come that you might have life"; and under that promise you feel for the first time how dead you have been. And yet once more—"That you might have it more abundantly"; and then Eternity opens before you with its picture of your poor soul made conscious of its vast capacity, for ever receiving new depths and riches of its Lord, who, to all eternity, shall never weary of bestowing Himself upon it.

He liveth, and we live!
His life for us prevails!
His fulness fills our mighty void,
His strength for us avails.

Life worketh in us now,
Life is for us in store;
So death is swallowed up of life;
We live forevermore.

O my God, who hast no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, save me from the death of sin; and when this life is fulfilled, bring me to the life everlasting: Through Jesus Christ our Life. Amen.

Wednesday after the First Sunday.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dreams dreams, your young men shall see visions.—JOEL, ii., 28.

THAT which these three words—prophecy, dream, and vision—represent, is felt by every considerate and large-minded man to be a true and necessary element of life. We may call it spirituality, enthusiasm, spontaneity, outlook, insight,—many names will do,—but what we mean by all of them is essentially the same. It is the power to see the element of eternal principles in which things live,—to see the way in which each fact and act is a true wave on the great ocean of infinity, to see all life full of the life of God,—and so to lose the sense of hardness and mechanicalness and separateness in the things which happen and the things we do. We know how difficult that is; we know how even the things which seem to be by very nature spiritual, and so least capable of such degeneration, become mechanical. Worship and charity and faith harden themselves

into machines; their life grows dull and stagnant. Oh, for a prophet, we cry, to plunge down to the principles of things, and make them live with some true reason for being done! Oh, for a dream to soften this hard outline, and make it richly blend with universal life and catch its value! Oh, for a vision which shall glorify the dull present with the sight of its own splendid possibilities! "Where there is no vision, the people perish," said Solomon. It was his assertion of the necessity of the inspired and spiritual element in life. The prophet, the vision, and the dream are as needful to the active life as the fountain to the stream, or as the bloom to the fruit, or as the fragrance to the flower, or as the soul to the man.

And there is where appears the glory and greatness of religious life . . . because, filling life with itself, it opens the gates of the mystery of life, makes it conscious of great, gracious, awful relationships, and turns every true believer into something of a seer. And it is religion as a *relationship* that fills the soul with vision. Have you not seen it? The martyr goes singing to the stake; it is as if he walked hand-in-hand with his beloved Christ, being led by Him into the very presence of the Father. The poor working woman sits with her

Bible on her knees, and the grim, dingy walls of her cabin expand and fade away, the worn face glows and softens into the beauty of an ageless youth, and the feet which an hour ago could just drag themselves home over the sidewalk from her long day's toil, are walking lightly with Christ beside the tree-shaded River of the water of life. It is a great relationship, a great Love in which her soul is bathing. May that be the religion and the power of the religion of us all!

The great *purpose* and the great *results* of actions make dreams and visions for the souls of men, which are always waiting to reveal themselves. . . . Here is the same action done by two men working side-by-side. One does it with delight, perhaps, in its details, perhaps only with monotonous reiteration of a long habit. The other does precisely the same thing because some great affection sent him to it,—his family needed the bread that he could earn, or he wanted to send his boy to college. . . . To one the iron which he strikes and the hammer he strikes with, are all. To the other each spark from the anvil kindles to a picture;—he sees the hungry faces at his home; he sees the thirst for knowledge in his boy's eyes. The act stands with its sluice-gates open towards the hills, and down from them

comes pouring the torrent of will and motive that makes the wheels of the actions turn to music. Suppose that every act, little or great, which men are doing, were thus filled with conscious motive,—mere dead habit exorcised, spontaneity and freedom and reasonable service everywhere,—would it not be another world than this—that world in which the prophecy should be fulfilled, and the old men should dream dreams ?

Still it would be a question how far back each dreamer's dream should go, into what regions of memory, what depth of first forces, it should be strong enough to carry him. We know where his who was most adventurous and profound must carry him; it could stop nowhere short of God. God is the only final dream of man. Door after door opens; there is no final chamber till we come where He sits. All that ought to be done in the world has a right to know itself finally as done for Him.

Then, there is the other side, what perhaps is more fitly called the *vision*,—by which we mean the look forward into the results of things. Yet this vision-seeing power, like the dream-dreaming power, completes and rounds itself in God. Many magnificent and fascinating pictures open themselves before the seer of visions as he anticipates what the great

redeemed and perfected world some day will be;—civilizations, institutions, education, forms of society, types of character,—all these in manifold, entrancing beauty fill the western sky, but they all get their radiance, as they get their unity, from God. The western sky has clouds of infinitely various glory, but the one source and centre of the glory is the sun.

Is not this the Vision of visions, the Vision in which all other visions are enfolded? Man shall find God; the imperfect shall come to perfection; the part shall rest itself in the whole; the child shall come to the Father's house. In many forms, in many colors, that is the vision which keeps the world's fainting heart alive, and makes the earth, through all its years of sorrow, rich with an undertreasure of perpetual joy.

When Jesus is going to wash His disciples' feet at the Last Supper, it is said that He does this action knowing that "He came from God and went to God." What words are these! "He came from God and went to God,"—are not the dream and the vision there, the God behind Him and the God before? No wonder that the act has lived and been a power!

Now, there are men who, at least sometimes, do

actions as Christ did that, knowing that they come from God and go to God. You say they are exceptions! That is just what the Bible says,—"Among whom ye shine as lights in the world." . . . Here is the strength of this great prophecy; the thing it prophesies is already on the earth. It shines in many an exalted soul. It shines supremely in Jesus. It has not to be created as something new; it has to be spread abroad, so that all men, women, and children shall be sharers in it. The light is here; some day it is to lighten every man. That is the glory of possibility which fills our prophecy. That gives us the opportunity of enthusiastic hope.

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,
Must the moral pioneer
From the Future borrow,
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,
And on midnight's skies of rain
Paint the golden morrow.

O Thou who inhabitest Eternity, yet art nigh to them that seek Thee; grant me by Thy grace to do all things as seeing Thee who art invisible, and to carry through things temporal such inspiring thoughts of things eternal, that I may finally come to Thy everlasting glory: Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday after the First Sunday.

In the way of righteousness is life.—PROV., xii., 21.

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.—MATT., xix., 17.

IT is striking, when we see how Christianity has been the awakener of thought and the stimulator of activity in all time, to look back to Christ and see that there is not a word in all His teaching to urge men directly to think, or to exhort them to industry in common things. There is no sign in what He distinctly said that He cared for thought or activity for themselves. Men say He did not care for them at all. . . . But He *did* care. Only, He knew that, as the old proverb of His people ran, "Out of the heart are the issues of life," and that only by having the heart alive (and by a live heart He meant a good heart) could true life, permanent, reliable life, come to the thinking brain and toiling hands. Therefore He bent His whole care over the heart. "Is this man alive?" He laid His hand upon the

heart to see whether it was beating, whether the man was trying to be good. "Is this man dead?" Again He laid His finger on the heart, and so long as there was a flutter there, so long as He felt under His sensitive touch the longing to be good yet trembling in the breast, He said, "This man still lives; and all awakening of the cold extremities, all quickening of intellect is still possible with him." He did care; He does care still whether you and I are thoughtful and skilful,—no gain of ours that is not joy to our loving Lord. But He sees divinely that all thought and skill must get value and real life only from goodness; and on that His eye is fastened, and His care is lavished. . . . This is no theory. It is the law which experience has proved. It is a law in whose light we can read most intelligently the whole strange history of our human nature. Wherever goodness has been the most positive and most coveted possession of humanity, in that age, in that land, humanity, taken as a whole, has been most thoroughly and systematically alive.

We here in America have one great, good characteristic: we hate torpidity. We glory in vitality. A "live man" is an American eulogy. . . . But who is the "live man" in whom our America

delights? If I find that the finger of popular admiration (which has, be it remembered, a terribly strong influence to carry *our* admiration with it) points to the dashing speculator, or to the scheming and overbearing politician, or to the wanton thinker ever ready to confound the faith of men with his half-thought theories, which he does not really believe himself,—if it points to these and says, "There is life"; then we need to go back with all the conscience and reverence in our souls, and hear Christ saying, "I am come that they might have life." If He came to give life, then these are not life, for He came to give none of these things.

Oh! let us keep the great, joyous love of vitality which is the glory of our land and time, but let us insist on looking deep enough for it. The "live man" is not the man whom men are praising for his energy; very often he is the deadest of the dead, and what men call his life is only the putrefaction of his moral nature. The "live man" is the man who loves goodness and desires it for himself and his brethren, and lets his love go out into effort wherever it gets a chance. "If a man love Me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode

with him,''—there was Christ's idea of a live man—the life of God in the soul of man.

Let no other life delude us. Let us feel Him standing with His hand upon our hearts, and know that He thinks nothing of any life that He does not feel beating there with the steady pulse of love for holiness and Him.

How know I that I am alive?
So only as I thrive
On truth, whose sweetness keeps the soul
Vigorous and pure and whole:
Heaven's breath within is immortality,—
The life that is, and evermore shall be.

O Christ, Who art the Fountain of life, grant that we thirst after no life that is not life in Thee, but that we strive ever to follow the steps of Thy most holy life, that so we may glorify Thee, and finally attain to everlasting life. Amen.

Friday after the First Sunday.

For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.—HEB., x., 14.

That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.—HEB., ii., 14.

DOES that mean that we have not to fight with sin, because Christ has fought with it? Or does it mean that His fighting with sin shows us *how* to fight with it and be successful? Does it not mean both? Is there not a double vicariousness,—a vicariousness of substitution, and a vicariousness of illustration? When the Lord goes, in our place, into the midst of sin, into the jaws of death, it is as when a brave guide climbs before a party of travellers up the face of a steep wall of ice, which they must all mount after him. He goes for them, not for himself. If he were going for himself alone, some venturous spring in what is for them an impossible place might set him in a moment on the ridge they have to reach, but he goes in a way where they can follow him. And as he goes he does two things

for them: First, he cuts down certain hindrances over which he has to clamber, so that when they come they do not have to clamber over them; and, second, he shows them the way to climb the steepest places, and cuts them footsteps in the ice so that they may be able to go where he has gone. He cries out to his poor, timid followers, "This thing you need not do, for I have done it"; and at other times he cries, "This thing you shall be able to do, for I have done it."

Is it not so with Jesus and what He did for us? There are some burdens of sin which no soul need ever bear, because of what the Saviour has already borne. There is a terror in death which we need never know, because He has died. There are some depths of darkness into which we look, but into which we need never descend, because He went so deep for us into the mysterious pain of life and death. Some clouds scatter as we approach them when we challenge them in the name of "His Agony and Bloody Sweat, His Cross and Passion, His Precious Death and Burial." And then there are other clouds, sufferings, fears, temptations, doubts, which do not scatter; into them we have to walk. But into them we know *how* to walk because He has already walked there. It is not a trackless

waste; the wisdom and the strength come from our Lord.

I think that, as the disciples came back from the Cross, and as they went on into their life, they must have become richly aware of how in both these ways their Lord had died for them. There were battles which they need not fight because He had fought them; there were other battles which they must fight all the more, but in which they certainly would be victorious because of His victory. Oh, that you and I could see that there are some darkest struggles from which we are forever released and exempted by His struggle! there are doubts, torments, agonies, which He underwent once for all, and we may pass them with unwounded feet and thankful hearts, as men walk free and happy over a battlefield where once their liberties were won, in a long, horrible day of fight and blood. Those burdens we are not to carry; that fight is not to be fought out again.

And there are other struggles which we *must* meet,—fights with our sins, struggles to be pure, and brave, and true, and kind, and holy. From those He cannot save us. The shadow of His Cross, falling on them, is not obliteration but inspiration. We cannot be spared the doing of them by

Him, but we can *do them by Him*, and that is better. See how complete is the salvation of the Cross for the man who is rescued from every suffering his soul can spare, and strengthened for every suffering and duty that his soul needs, by the Crucified Christ! By one sacrifice He hath perfected forever them that should be sanctified.

By that one sacrifice! Such is the mystery of tireless Grace and Love. It seems so far off, that Cross of Jesus, and it really is so near! For it is lifted up so high that the waves of time roll unheeded and unmeaning at its foot. It is the power of perfection for us to-day. We too may cast at its foot the burdens and the sufferings which we need not keep, because our Lord has taken them; and in its light we may renew the fight with sin which we must fight, from which we cannot escape, but in which we shall surely conquer because our Lord has conquered. No soul ought to be carrying any weight or trouble which really is its Lord's, or to be discouraged in any task or trouble which is really its own.

The herb that brings forgetfulness,
  And makes all wounds grow whole,
And sends God's peace to soothe and bless
  The hopeless travailing soul,

And has immortal power to still
The fiercest wind and tide,
Springs at the foot of that dark hill
Where Christ was crucified.

O Blessed Saviour, Who camest to destroy the works of the devil, suffer not devil, world, or flesh to destroy us; neither suffer ourselves to destroy ourselves. Give us grace to do what we can to help ourselves, and of Thy free grace do Thou for us and in us what we cannot. For Thy mercy's sake. Amen.

Saturday after the First Sunday.

What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light.—MATT., x., 27.

WHO does not long to speak words that shall be like sunbeams, opening and illuminating every corner of a hearer's life? But when we look at our own selves, when we see how, the more we learn of truth, the more the vastness of what we do not know opens before us, we are set to wondering how it is possible that out of such darkness light can come. The duty of giving clear light grows no less imperative, but we marvel how we are to give to others what we do not find in ourselves, how it is possible to fulfil the commission, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light."

Yet this duty of speaking in the light, of bringing truth clearly to other souls than our own, belongs to every one of us, and every one meets the same question,—"How shall I speak in light that which God speaks to me in darkness?" Just see what

the illustrations are. Here is a mother to whom a child is looking with the implicit faith of childhood. To him she is infallible. He has a faith in her which never questions; and day by day he walks in the clear light that her words give him. The difference of right and wrong, the lines of what he must do and must not do, the truth of God, the truth of Christ, the other world that is to come,—it is the light from her teachings that falls on all of these and makes them truth to him. And yet how many a time the mother, with her deeper thought, has felt in what a darkness it was that God spoke to her what she spoke to her boy in such light, how much of mystery there was enveloping all that she made so plain to him! Or take some man in the community who is always a source of light to all his fellow-citizens. His words cast their illumination over every subject. . . . But do we think that every conviction leaped in a moment to his consciousness, that it is not by some transmission through his experience, often clouded with dust, that the abstract truth has passed into the clear, sharp, tangible statement of duty which his fellows catch from him?

We believe that, however inadequate our statement of the truth may be, still it is true; and, bear-

ing its inadequacy always in our mind, we still have such a knowledge as may serve for a law of life and lead us towards the fuller apprehension,—such, therefore, as we may rejoice to teach our brethren. . . . For is there any knowledge that is perfect? Is it not true of every knowledge which we have that its best statements are but imperfect formulas which represent afar off what we by no means wholly know? And yet upon these knowledges we act, and by our faithful use of them are always coming nearer to the perfect knowledge. The seaman knows but the beginning of the mysteries of winds and waves, and yet, using the knowledge which he has, he steers his ship across the ocean to the harbor on the other side. The statesman learns in darkness the dark principles of national life, and yet out of that darkness he brings certain laws of government, and guides his people into brighter and brighter light. So everywhere we act upon imperfect knowledge, which is true as far as it goes, and correctly though inadequately represents the perfect. And so with Christ,—who of us claims to know His nature wholly? I know that when we come to heaven, we shall see Him as we do not see Him now; but yet the Christ we know now is the true Christ, though not the whole Christ. I am sure

that it is right for me to love and trust Him as if I knew Him perfectly. . . . I see the reasonableness of the principle which He Himself has laid down—that, by the obedience and love of what we know already, we may always be led into the knowledge of far more. That principle unlocks the gates of everlasting growth. Before me stretches the continual revelation of my Lord. Eternity can never grow so old that I shall not be, just as I am more and more obedient to Christ, more wise in Christ for ever.

To all who have to teach or to comfort (and who is there of us into whose lot it does not sometimes fall), is not this the lesson that must come ?—we who would help each other need a profounder experience, a profounder love of truth ourselves. Down into serious contemplation of sacred and eternal things we must go to get the help our brothers need, down into the darkness of those thoughts where man comes close to God, to learn what we may teach in the light. . . . Oh, that we could understand how deep Christ went for all the help and teaching that He gave! Out of the darkness of the wilderness came the light of the temple. Out of the darkness of the tomb came the light of the resurrection.

O fathers, mothers, friends, ministers, teachers, scholars, men! in all our darkness we must give each other light. To love the truth on one hand and our brethren on the other, to love God and God's children, that will make our human nature transparent so that God can shine through it. For this one thing we are sure of—that no man ever yet loved Christ, and loved his brother, that Christ did not find His own way through him into his brother, and so help and enlighten both the humble teacher and learner *with Himself*.

May that give courage to all of us who teach and learn!

He hath spoken in the darkness,
  In the silence of the night,
Spoken sweetly of the Father,
  Words of life, and love and light . . .
What He telleth in the darkness—
  Songs He giveth in the night—
Rise and speak it in the morning,
  Rise and sing them in the light!

He hath spoken in the darkness,
  In the silence of thy grief,
Sympathy so deep and tender,
  Mighty for thy heart-relief . . .
What He tells thee in the darkness,
  Weary watcher for the day,

Grateful lip and life should utter
When the shadows flee away.

He is speaking in the darkness,
Though thou canst not see His face,
More than angels ever needed,—
Mercy, pardon, love and grace . . .
What He tells thee in the darkness,
Whispers through Time's lonely night,
Thou shalt speak in glorious praises,
In the everlasting light!

O Lord Jesus, the Truth, the Wisdom, the Word of God; of Thine exceeding goodness make me, I beseech Thee, to learn so diligently and humbly of Thee, that I may be replenished with wisdom however scant my knowledge; and may be able to speak gracious words or keep gracious silence in all my daily walk with Thee and with those whom Thou hast given me. Amen.

Second Sunday in Lent.

These three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job.—Ezek., xiv., 14.

Noah, the Believer in God's Word, Daniel, the Doer of God's Law, and Job, the patient Bearer of God's Will,—these are the three forms in which life comes to every man, these are the three characters into which men are trained by every faithful acceptance of their life at the hands of God, and these are the three types of loyalty in whose completion humanity would be complete. To one man life is a problem to be solved; it is the darkness which distresses him; it is light, only light, which he craves. To another man life is a duty to be done, a task that calls for power and steadfastness;—weakness and fear and idleness are what he dreads. And yet to other men life is a burden to be borne,—a weight laid heavily upon the shoulders which needs a simple, passive strength that will not yield, a steadying of the bent back, a stiffening of the trembling muscles to bear the heavy downward

pressure of this human living. Often these types of character follow each other in the course of one developing life. . . . The man who has known life only as a problem beginning to realize it as a task, and seeing it grow clear, concrete, and almost solid before his eyes; or the man who has known life as a task becoming gradually aware of its mystery and almost seeing its narrow limitations open and its infiniteness manifest itself; or the man in whom there has been the craving for truth and the faithfulness in work coming at last to see that there is a crown to both of these, which can come only when a man is content to sit in the darkness and wait for the will of God;—these are the moments of rich experience, the times when Noah, Daniel, and Job meet one another in the city of our life.

We see that this is not a fancy; we know that these are indeed perpetually distinct types of human character, because of the different sorts of men which we see that they produce entirely apart from religion. . . . They appear, clearly distinguishable, in the most earthly pagan life. There, too, are Noah, Daniel, and Job, the counterparts, in the lower sphere of self-reliance, of the great heroes of the upper world of faith in God. . . . One man peers into life to *understand* it; another man lays

his strong hands on life to *do* it; another man bends his back simply to *take* it. But our three men in the Bible add something to this;—they do not merely indicate the different dispositions and illustrate the different lots of men which we see everywhere, but they live their different lives in obedience to God. One love pervades them all. Noah listens in docility while God tells him how the ark of his safety must be built; Daniel lifts up his eyes to God, and then goes and does his duty in Babylon with the den of roaring lions yawning at his side; Job sits in his misery and bears it patiently because it came from God. Then out of their several centuries, out of their scattered homes—Noah out of his far distant antiquity where we can fix neither time nor place, Daniel out of Babylon, Job out of the land of Uz—they come and meet in this city of Ezekiel's vision. Noah hears his messages, Daniel does his faithful work, Job meets his pain, in these streets which have existence only in the prophet's dream. At once that unbuilt city becomes the picture of the world in which humanity works out its great career under the care of God. Life the Problem, Life the Task, and Life the Burden, meet the souls of men everywhere; and, by the docility and fidelity and patience which are trained in them,

the city of our human life is gradually filled with God.

Surely it gives us a very deep sense of the richness of the world and its material when we see how in it and by it God may thus train the natures of His children. We abuse the world, we talk of how it hides the truth from us, of how it threatens us or allures us to do what is wrong, of how its hard blows make us suffer, of how its heavy weights crush us, but certainly there is another thought, more gracious and more generous, about this rich old Earth that so uncomplainingly takes our complaints, and never withholds its bounty for all our fretfulness and grumbling. Certainly, if mystery can make faith, and temptation can make fidelity, and pain can make patience, then the Earth which teems with all three may be a very blessed place. All through eternity we may look back out of the perfect light and holiness and joy of heaven, and love the old Earth, where these mixed and troubled years were lived, for the memory of its mystery, its temptation, and its pain.

The city is rich in which there is a Noah, a Daniel, and a Job. Each adds his element to what the rest contribute, and the whole city's life grows balanced and complete. The life is rich which God

has filled with knowledge, duty, and patience, making them all channels through which He gives to it Himself. Let us pray to Him that we may rebel against no treatment, though it seem to us very hard, which enriches us with any one of these elements that we may lack; and makes us a little more wise with His wisdom, or faithful to His law, or patient under His will. For so only can we gain Him, whom to have perfectly is the perfection of our life.

The very thinking of the thought,
Without or praise or prayer,
Gives light to know, and life to do,
And marvellous strength to bear.

O my God, bestow upon me such confidence, such peace, such happiness in Thee, that Thy will may always be dearer to me than my own will, and Thy pleasure than my own pleasure. All that Thou givest is Thy free gift to me, all that Thou takest away Thy grace to me. Be Thou thanked for all, praised for all, loved for all. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday after the Second Sunday.

He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.—JOHN, vii., 18.

Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.—1 COR., x., 31.

UTTERLY broken away from the easy peace of careless living, incapable of it by His whole nature, Jesus had pressed on until He had entered into that other peace which lies beyond, the peace of a perpetual consciousness of God. When I look at His life, when I hear Him saying, with a rich contentment in His voice that makes needless the sight of a smile on His face, "The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always the things which please Him,"—then I understand by contrast the misery of that false self-consciousness which is always questioning whether God has not deserted it, and which shrinks from any frank filial assurance that its struggles to do His will have surely pleased Him. But none the less, as I hear Jesus say these words, do I shrink from the cheap and weak philosophy which,

because self-consciousness is likely to be morbid, would stifle self-consciousness altogether,—which, because souls may misconceive their relation to God, would bid the soul forget its relation to God entirely and live as if it belonged only to the earth, finding its task only as the brook finds its path from the slope of the rock that it runs over, not as the tide finds its way up to the beach by the summons of the moon over its head,—forgetting God and only remembering the task that He has given, and trusting God to find His own way to the soul that does His task, hoping that it may at length be filled unconsciously with Him.

There is much of such exhortation now-a-days, and we can see where it has come from; it is the sight of morbid self-consciousness making men want to stifle self-consciousness altogether. But Jesus teaches us a better way. With Him self-consciousness is perfect. Not merely His task, but the purpose of His task, and, as the soul of its purpose, the Giver of His task, are with Him always. "I do always the things which please Him," He declares. He never loses Himself in His task, in our ordinary sense,—a sense in which when we lose ourselves in our tasks, we often escape from self-consciousness and pride only to condemn ourselves to sordidness

and pettiness. Jesus loses Himself not in His task, but in His Father: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." And then He opens this experience of His into a universal law of life,—"He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him." O my dear friends, there is our safety! If you think about the details of your work as if there were nothing beyond them, you grow special, narrow, petty. If you think about yourself and your culture or your credit in your work, you grow either proud or moody. If you think about your Father who gave you your work, you grow faithful, serene, happy, and noble; and, what is best of all, you come through Him into true sympathy with all other workers who are aware of Him, however different their work may be from yours. Only, in order to attain all this, you must know through all your life that God *is* your Father, and that He has indeed given you what you are doing. . . . If a man or woman is able to get and keep that [knowledge], there is no drudgery so mean and crushing that it cannot be lifted and made buoyant —absolutely none. . . . If you can do it for God, in perfect, childlike, loving desire for His glory, then your work, be it as heavy in its nature

as it may, leaps itself from the low ground, and carries you every day into the presence of the God for whom you do it. That is the continual beauty of a consecrated life, possible under all sorts of circumstances, possible to every kind of man in every kind of task.

Lord, give me light to do Thy work;
For only, Lord, from Thee
Can come the light by which these eyes
The way of work can see.

The work is Thine, not mine, O Lord;
It is Thy race we run;
Give light, and then shall all I do,
Be well and truly done.

O God, Who has set us our work to do in life, give us grace to do it in and for Thee. Grant that no temptation of this present evil world may lead us to forget that Thee, and only Thee, we must serve in all things. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday after the Second Sunday.

They answered Him, We . . . were never in bondage to any man.—JOHN, viii., 33.

SIN is one master in many forms, but when it has taken its slave it holds him with a terrible power. Not that the slave is always conscious of it; such is his strange perversion that sometimes he takes the very fact of his slavery and makes it out to be a proof of freedom. Look at the young man in the hideous career of dissipation: he calls it liberty; he waves his flag as he rushes along, and says, "Behold, how free I am!" He is honest enough; he thinks that he is free. But let him try to stop! —then he finds that the headlong rush which he calls freedom is really slavery. It is as much slavery when a torrent is whirled helpless on to the sea as when a lake lies rotting in forced stagnation under the sun. Oh! there is no power of sin so subtle and so hateful as that which makes the sinner think that he is free in sinning.

Another of our masters is *fear*. There is no man with sense enough to feel the Infinite which is close to him, and who is destitute of a religious assurance of reconciliation and harmony with that Infinite, who is not afraid. If anything goes wrong, if any panic smites a people, you feel a thrill and stir which let you know that no man has forgotten the mystery and awfulness of life, no man has forgotten that only a thin plank of fragile circumstance separates him from the infiniteness of eternity and God. It is not an ignoble fear; it is noble. It is the consciousness of being *out of place*, out of relation to what we have to do with,—floating on eternity and God, but foreign to them. The only release comes by the soul becoming perfectly reconciled with the Infinite on which it rests, entering into the nature of the mystery it feared, becoming the child of God. Then it cannot fear God any longer, any more than the wave fears the deep sea out of which it sprang, with which it is one in nature, upon whose breast it runs its race, and to which it returns.

Another kind of slavery is our slavery to men, from which nothing can set us free except the liberation which comes to us as the sons of God. . . . All simple rebellion against our brethren's dictation and assumed authority makes us obstinate and turns

us into outlaws. We must take refuge from the authority of man in the fatherly authority of God, or we are like prisoners escaped from a prison into a desert, who must sooner or later come back to their prison again, and beg to be taken into it as their only refuge from cold and starvation.

[But] our worst slavery is our slavery to ourselves. Its terribleness is in its intimacy. The self that is despot and the self that is slave are so very close together! It seems as if nothing could come in between them. But when something does,—when closer to ourself than ourself comes in our brother, so that we would rather give ourself to him than to ourself,—then the self-bondage is broken, and our chains lie at our feet. But closer than our brother comes our Father,—nay, our brother comes closest to us only in our Father's closeness, and so the real release from the bondage of self-love comes with the love of God. We escape from the slavery of selfishness only as we come into the liberty of the children of God. Not to deny yourselves, O friends, but to love and serve God is the way to break down the tyranny.

This is the story of man's slavery; these are our masters. Jesus said once to the Jews who were crowding around Him and calling themselves His

disciples, " You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, " We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man." Jesus answered them, " Verily, verily, I say unto you; whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." It was the same thing there in old Jerusalem, precisely the same thing which we have here to-day. Christ comes to men and wants to free them with His truth; and the answer is, " We are not slaves; it is absurd, fanatical to talk so." But what is the real truth ? *Are* you free ? When not a day passes that there is not some brave, generous, self-sacrificing, truthful, godly thing which you know you ought to do, but which you do not do because your sin, or your fear, or your neighbor, or yourself, forbids you, do you need no liberation ? Oh, we are not free, not wholly free, one of us; and we never shall be till we are thoroughly back in our Father's family, thoroughly the children of God through Christ. " If the Son shall make us free, we shall be free indeed."

When a little child is brought to Baptism in that grand, sweet Sacrament which men make so small and petty, it is " made the child of God." In the declaration of its essential nature, in the anticipation of its best possibility, it is laid in its Father's arms,

and declared to be His. That act is the declaration of the child's emancipation. Not under sin, not in fear, not by other men's standards, not for himself, that child is to live; but there, at the very outset of his life, it is sublimely recognized that he can escape from all these only by claiming his place in his Father's household. If he is not God's child, why should he *not* be the world's drudge?

Oh, that that truth of the Baptism might run through all our lives! Oh, that we might expect no holiness, no courage, no independence, no self-sacrifice, except in the household and the heart of our Father; no liberty except the glorious liberty of the children of God!

One Master, only one, have we;
His rule is perfect liberty;
His law is love, his love is life;
His service sets us free from strife,
From fear, from self, from sin, from death;
In Him alone we draw free breath;
And, every earthly bondage riven,
At last He makes us free of heaven!

Almighty and everlasting God, of Whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday after the Second Sunday.

Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?—ROM., vi., 16.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.—2 Cor., x., 15.

He that abideth in . . . Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.—2 John, 9.

He that hath the Son hath life.—1 John, v., 12.

THIS setting of the less and finite into the complete Infinite Nature Christ calls by various names. Sometimes it is faith: you must believe in God. Sometimes it is affection: you must love God. Always what it means is the same thing: you must belong to God. Then His life shall be your life. I am come to bring you to Him, that so you may have life, and have it more abundantly. Sometimes He seems to gather up His fullest declaration of this vital connection of man with God, and call it by one mighty word—obedience. You must obey God, and so live by Him.

How words degrade themselves! How, used to express a base relation between base natures, this great word—obedience—has grown base and hard and servile! Men hate the sound of it. Men dread the thought of it as a disgrace. "I never will obey," men say, as if so they asserted the greatness of their souls. Is it not true that what they really assert is the meagreness of their lives? He who obeys nothing receives nothing. Obedience, in the purity of its idea, is the setting of life into life as the tree is set into the ground, so that the life which is obeyed may pour its vitality into the obeying life. You set your life into a dead thing, and it pours into you its death. You obey a living thing (and to such only have you right to give yourself in obedience), and at once you are a sharer in its life. This is the principle under which the strength of the strongest becomes the possession of the weak, and the whole universe throbs with the mutual ministries of its parts. You obey a Law, which is but a Truth declaring its authority, and all the richness of the Truth, and of the Law which expresses it, is yours. You obey the master, and the art you wish to learn, and all the treasuries which his long years of study and toil have filled to overflowing, open their gates to you. . . .

Let us glorify Obedience. It is not slavery, but mastery. He who obeys is master of the master whom he serves. He has his hand in the very depths of his master's treasures. When God says to His people, "Do this and live," He is not making a bargain; He is declaring a necessary truth. "He who does My will, possesses Me; for My will is the broad avenue to the deepest chambers of My life. There is nothing in Me that he who obeys Me may not reach according to his power. 'Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine';"—so speaks the infinite God to the obedient child. But to disobedience the door is closed. Whatever wealth there may be is none of his. Obedience means mastery and wealth. Therefore let us glorify obedience, which is light and life, and dread disobedience, which is darkness and death. Find your true masters, and obey them. For only in obedience do you enrich your life. Live and obey. Obey and live.

Christ crowded it all into His parable of the Talents. The Talent in the napkin—action shunned because action is dangerous—that is not life, but death. "Act! act! turn powers into deeds," is the perpetual exhortation of the Lord of Life. There is a stingy caution which will do nothing for fear of

doing wrong, and so does wrong all the time. But all the time the talent is the Lord's talent, to be used *in obedience* to Him. "Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own." Every deed is part of one great drama through which flows one vast purpose, by union with which purpose alone does any deed be strong. What folly it is to be selfish! It is one wheel of the vast engine unbelting itself from all its brother wheels, saying, "I will spin my own music; I will not be obedient," and lo! it whirls wildly into space a minute, and then drops into the sand and dies. That is dissipation; that is what men sometimes call Life. Blessed is it if the poor, wretched, dissipated wheel is taken up by the kind master of the engine, and reforged in any hot furnace of pain, and set once more in its true place from whence it flew. That is blessed; but a thousand-fold more blessed is it for the wheel which catches from the first the glory of service, makes every revolution a delight in responding to the throb and beat of the central power, finds every deed dignified by the entire motion of the whole, loses itself and so finds itself, and lives by obedience, and lives ever more and more abundantly.

Knowledge, will—
These twain are strong, but stronger yet the third,—
Obedience ;—'t is the great tap-root that still,
Knit round the rock of duty, is not stirred,
Though heaven-loosed tempests spend their utmost skill.

Lord Jesus, grant me grace to come to Thee in obedience, and by constant obedience to abide with Thee ; that my foundation may be upon the Rock of Ages, and that underneath me may be the Everlasting Arms. Hold me fast that I may cleave unto Thee ; embrace me that I may cling to Thee. **Amen.**

Thursday after the Second Sunday.

Because the creature itself shall be delivered from bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.—Rom., viii., 21.

The centralness of man! All truest study of the world finds in the human life its purpose and its key. Everything in Nature, every plant and mineral, if we watch it long enough, wisely enough, opens its heart and reveals some service which it is made to render to our life. The Bible speaks, and under its majestic symphony of human history runs a deep, correspondent music from the dumb and brutish world; the primal innocence of man blooms in a blooming garden; the fall of man and his long struggle upward brings the picture of a world all thorns and thistles, bleakness and bitterness, with richness and fertility laboring beneath, and more and more breaking their hard but certain way through. All civilized societies, all little circles of people using the world, and making the world they use assume their aspect,—all of these testify to

how " the creature," by the law of God who made it, shares in the character and destiny of man who is its master.

This is just Paul's idea. The world, he says, is what man makes it. It rises and falls with him. " The world is not bad," he declares; " if anything is bad, it is you. You curse the world; the world does not curse you. The world is what you make it." And then he goes on with a great, suggestive figure: " The whole trouble lies here," he says,— " man is not free. Man is a slave." The creature, then, the whole created world, is not merely a servant, it is the servant of a servant; it is a slave of a slave. If man were really free, the world's dignity and power would consist in doing his will; as it is, with him a slave, its disgrace and shame lie in the fact that it shares his slavery. It never can come to its full beauty and effect till it is called out by him to its best service, till he becomes free, and it, serving a free master, has a chance to show its best. . . . Everywhere the slave of a slave is wretched. His slave-master vents on him the misery and rage of his disgrace. There is no hope for the slave-servant till first the slave-master is made free, and he is delivered from bondage into the glorious liberty which his lord attains.

I ask one of you men, "Why are you not a [better] Christian?" What is your answer? "Oh, my business! It holds me; it restrains me; I cannot think of spiritual things. I cannot consecrate myself. My business is of the earth, earthy; it holds me down."

That business is your world. It is "the creature" with which you have to do. It is your slave. And you, *you* are a slave to your own selfishness, to your own lust of gain. Your business shares your slavery. It is the slave of a slave. Of course it is degrading. But suppose you were free; suppose, by a strong struggle and with the grace of God, you broke your chains and were no longer selfish; suppose you loved God, and meant to serve Him, Him alone. That business of yours would then be a freeman's slave. It would be liberated in your liberation. It would no longer drag you down, but lift you up. It would make you a better Christian every day. The creature itself would be delivered from bondage into the glorious liberty on which you would have entered as a child of God. . . .

When the race of men is liberated from all slaveries into the freedom of God, the whole world is to be transformed, the creature is to be delivered from the "bondage of corruption." That is a glorious

picture, a mighty, fascinating vision. But a more immediately precious truth for you and me is this, —that as each man is set free *now* the world is already transformed for him, the new heaven and the new earth come already to the member of Christ, the child of God, the inheritor of the kingdom of heaven! I cannot doubt that this world was a different thing to Jesus Christ from what it is to us. The same color in the flowers and the sky, the same look in the faces of fellow-men, the same defects and merits in the government of Cæsar,—but all different because He was different,—all bursting out with helps and Godspeeds to His holiness because He was the child of God,—all his Father's world, and so all His world, lending itself freely to the culture of His character and the fulfilment of His plans. I find no word of querulous dissatisfaction upon Jesus' lips about the world He had come into. It was a good enough world to live a good life in,—no doubt with pain, no doubt with violent collisions, but yet with no impossibilities. There was nothing in it which the good man might not use for good. And always man was not to be improved by being put into a better world, the world was to be renewed by the occupation of a renewed and holy manhood.

Against the cowardly and bitter way with which we charge our sins upon our circumstances, that clear, brave, happy tone of Jesus rings out like the trumpet that announces the morning. Not in our stars, but in ourselves; not in the world, but in the man the trouble lies. Not in your world, but in *you*. If you are free in Christ your world shall leap to help you. And freedom comes by faith. Believe in Christ, and let Him lead you to His Father, and nothing can hold you prisoner or keep you from being all that His Father and your Father made you to be.

> . . . Ah, so may all be free!
> Then shall the world grow sweet at core and sound,
> And, moved in blest and ordered circuit, see
> The bright millennial sun rise fair and round,
> Heaven's day begin, and Christ, whose service is
> Freedom all perfect, rule the world as His.

Blessed Jesus, Who camest to preach deliverance to the captives, give us holy freedom; strike off these binding chains of sin and lead us forth into the land of righteousness; for Thy Name's sake. Amen.

Friday after the Second Sunday.

He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again. —2 Cor., v., 15.

When we recall how Jesus seemed to be driven by other people to His death, how the Jews plotted against Him, how His own friend betrayed Him, how Pilate delivered Him to His tormentors, how they dragged Him from the judgment hall to Golgotha, then how they drove the nails through hands and feet and set the Cross up in the ground, it is impressive to be told that He who suffered—the poor, meek, tortured Victim—was after all the real Will, the true Chooser, in the whole. It is the echo of those serene, sublime words of Christ Himself, "I lay down My life. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." This was His mastery of His own life. . . .

And then, this mastery is not only over life, but

over death. Christ not merely lived with a purpose, but He died with a purpose, too. Death seems so purposeless to most men! They live with more or less of purpose, but they seem to die at random. It comes from the narrowness and shortness of all that they conceive. Their plans have just vitality enough to last this life out, but they are not vital enough, not spiritual enough, to spring across the gulf and be at home on the other side. . . . It is possible to have the aim of life so pure and spiritual that it may serve us in dying as well as in living. It is possible, and it is glorious. The man who has lived to make money cannot die so as to be a little richer. But the man who has lived to be good, and to do good, sees those ambitions that have led him all the way grow brighter as his way draws near its close. They never burned so brightly as when he sees them just across the River! He dies for his desires more earnestly than he has ever lived for them. That was the glory of the death of Christ. It was no accident; it burns yet with the intensity of that same loving purpose of salvation which had filled all His life. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live for themselves, but unto Him which died for them."

This phrase—"living unto"—is very pregnant.

The things men's lives are aimed at, the things they live towards, are what really make or unmake them. And it was that we might "not live unto ourselves" that Jesus died; first, that we should not live for our own pleasure; and, second, that we should not live after our own pattern. A man goes on from day to day with no more lofty aim than to please himself;—"What shall I like? What shall I choose?" he asks, as every new morning starts the dull clock-work of his life afresh. No look pierces beyond himself and finds another, to please whom is dearer, sweeter, than to please himself. His desires stop, satisfied, in the fancied gardens of his own joy, and have no noble enterprise to travel farther.

And so, too, with his standards. Matching himself against himself, satisfied if he does not fall below the work he has already done, only disgusted with himself when he falls below the average that his own life has established, copying himself over and over again, he goes on in the tiresome routine of his low content. That is what it is for a man to live unto himself,—to seek forever his own pleasure, to copy over and over again his own imperfect life.

Against that we set, what? Why, living unto Christ. Suppose that it is possible for a man,

instead of trying to please himself, to be always trying to please Christ; instead of copying himself, to be forever copying the perfection of the Perfect Life. These things *are* possible; men, women—yes, and little children, learn to do them both. Instead of asking, "What will please me?" there stands up the will of Him who can only be pleased with the highest. Instead of the level repetition of himself, the man is always going up, away from himself, with the lofty struggle to be like the Lord. New hopes,—aye, and new disappointments, come into the life. New dreams, new visions, quicken the zest of living. The reign of selfishness is over; we are not looking down upon ourselves, we are looking up to Him, and going forward, going upward. That is living unto Him who died for us.

Was that indeed what Jesus died for? Was He thinking of all that as He toiled on, bearing the heavy cross to where He was to hang upon it? He looked round as He went and He saw men and women . . . as they crowded up to see the spectacle. And oh! we cannot tell with what divine clearness, out beyond that little crowd, He saw the endless line of men and women who were yet to live, how through those shouts He heard the restless cries of all humanity in all its generations.

Was He thinking of it all the time—was it supporting Him and making Him triumphant—was He always saying to Himself, "I am dying for all these, that all of them may live henceforth not to themselves, but to Me!" Oh! if Christ were less than we love to believe Him to be, how terrible these words would be! To put Himself as the crown and end of all things! . . . The martyr dies, and it is not himself, it is a truth that he leaves burning where his ashes fell, whose manifestation and glorification he desires. If out of the flames about his stake there comes a voice, it says, not, "Live for me," but "Live for the truth that I have shown you that a man can die for." No *man* dare set himself before his brethren, and say, "Attain to me and be perfect!" But Christ says just that. As He struggles along, our dear Lord looks around and His one prayer for those people is that they may *live to Him.* All truth, all growth, all holiness, is wrapped up in that. It *must* be God who is so absolute, who sees in the attainment of Himself the perfection of mankind! It must be God who knows no more terrible lamentation over a human soul than this, "It would not come unto Me"; who has no larger prayer to pray for a human soul than this,—"that it may live unto Him." In

Him is the perfection of goodness, the entire satisfaction of the human soul; and that is God.

I think we can understand it then. When the horizon opens, and the cloud is broken through,—when the Jew, travelling out of Egypt, comes to the borders, and the sea which lies there parts and opens, and beyond lies Canaan all free for him to enter, even though a desert is yet to cross,—when the man struggling to perfect himself comes to the borders of his selfhood, and there the sea is parted, and the way lies open into the infinite holiness of God, even though a long and toilsome desert lies between,—when the old standards sink and one new Standard rises, and, so simple after the old life's complexity, so warm after the old life's coldness, there stands the Christ and gathers all duty and all hope together into one complete attainment, and says, "Please Me," "Be like Me; be like Me by pleasing Me," and when any man sets out to do that, makes Christ his Master, his Object, his Hope, his Law,—then he is living unto Christ; and he goes on more and more living *into* Christ.

Our life is hid with Christ,
With Christ in God above;
Upward our heart doth go to Him,
Whom, seeing not, we love.

Like Him we then shall be,
Transformed and glorified;
For we shall see Him as He is,
And in His light abide.

O Merciful Saviour, Who in Thy wondrous love didst give Thyself unto death that we might have life; grant me grace to realize more and more the blessedness of living unto Thee; so that I may faithfully serve Thee here, and when I go hence may be found in Thee, in Whom alone is everlasting life. Neither pray I for myself alone, but for all whom Thou hast given me. Amen.

Saturday after the Second Sunday.

The Father himself loveth you because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.—JOHN, xvi., 27.

WHEN the great, indiscriminate affection which God has for all His children, just because they *are* His children, begins to pulsate with discrimination, —when the love which has sent rain and dew without distinction passes over into a deeper love which gives the deeper happiness with most delicate adjustment, so that no two souls in all the world are blessed entirely and perfectly alike,—there can be only one test by which that new discrimination can be regulated. It must be by their power to receive these deeper blessings; and so it must be by their personal conditions and qualities that souls are rated in the deeper distribution of this deeper love of God. And so it follows that if to "love Christ" is made the condition of being loved by God, then to "love Christ" must mean a personal condition, a personal quality. This is the first truth of Christianity, without which Christianity becomes thin

and sentimental,—that a man must *be* something in order that he may love Christ, and so his loving Christ must mean that he *is* something.

This rests upon a universal principle, which is that none can truly love a being unless he shares that being's nature, unless he has something of that being's nature in himself, and so that our loves are the tests and proofs of what nature there is in us, and so that all our advances are measured by the higher and higher loves of which we are always becoming capable. That principle lies deep in the very heart of all our culture and enjoyment. It is really the principle of life. . . . When God sent His Son into the world this law found its complete exhibition. Whoever loved Him should be loved of God; and I think we see that it must have been because those who loved Him were proved hereby to be worthy of, or, we may more fitly say, to be *capable of receiving* the love of God. . . .

Think of Christ's followers,—John the Baptist, Peter, John, Andrew, Mary Magdalen,—nay, Mary, His mother, the first human being who ever loved Christ, the gentle leader of the hosts of souls who have loved Him since,—*they* all had this power of taking His greatness and making it theirs by their adoration of Him. And so the Father, who was

well pleased in Him, could be well pleased in them. And as He sat with some of them around the table, He could look into their faces and say, "The Father loveth you because ye have loved Me." . . .

Look at the Cross,—what is the love of the sinner who stands there at its foot, renewing the love of John and Mary who stood in that same cruel presence years ago? Is it gratitude to Him who dies there, not for Himself but for the sinner? Certainly it is! But can that gratitude exist unless the patience and the love and the loftiness and the purity of the Sufferer have pressed themselves upon the wondering soul, and won that only homage which any noble nature ever cares to receive from any other nature,—the homage of struggle for likeness, of emulation? The Cross shows not merely what Christ does, but what Christ is. The heart that beats against the Cross is not merely gathering into itself Christ's mercy, but shaping itself upon Christ's character. The love of gratitude and the love of adoration go together when the act that does the wonderful benefit likewise shows the Perfect Nature.

There is yet another thing about this love of God for the soul that loves Christ. It is indicated in the

last clause of these words of Jesus,—" The Father loveth you because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from God." God is the sole blessing of the universe, because He fills it all, and there is no room in it for any other benefactor. Wherever there is any real, pure joy in any smallest pleasure-bearing vein of man's existence, there is God. Wherever in all the world there is anything really worthy of His creatures' adoration and emulation, it is He. He is the hero's heroism and the martyr's strength and the saint's piety; and He is always uncontent if any one of His children, loving any goodness anywhere, does not trace it back to Him, and love Him in loving it. He sees that none of His children get the best good out of any blessing unless they receive Him in it; and so He says, " I give Myself to those who take their blessings as from Me." Is not this just what Jesus says?—" My Father loves you because you have believed that I, whom you love, came forth from God." He loves you because you have loved Me *as His.* Your love for Me He has accepted as love for Himself; and so, when I say, " He loves you because you have loved Me," it is but the echo of what He Himself said long ago, " I love them that love Me."

Here is the lesson for us, my friends. The more we can fasten the life of Jesus to, and identify it with, the life of God,—the more we can see in Him the direct utterance of the Divine, Eternal Being,—the more we believe that He came forth from God, and the more thoroughly we accept His own words, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father";—so much the more our love to Him will win for us, will open our souls to and make us able to receive, the love of God. This is the value of our belief in the Divinity of Jesus; it makes Him such that love for Him can fit us for the love of God, which is the life of man.

The love of Jesus is not only an act of the soul, it is a quality *in* the soul. I do not disparage the jubilant delight with which the burdened sinner knows his forgiveness, and stands on his feet thanking his Lord, but that thankfulness is not the love of Jesus. Only when to a soul, in silence or in tumult, forth from all the mass and multitude of being, He, Jesus Christ, stands supreme, alone, and the soul, giving itself to His service, finds in Him the complete utterance of Divine Goodness and Divine Help, and grows like Him by its admiration and adoration,—then, then only does a soul love Jesus Christ as He wants to be loved; and then the

promise of Jesus is certainly fulfilled to it, and the Father loves it because it loves the Son, and believes that He came forth from God.

Here is the place wherein all souls may meet. The bravest, the hardest, the tenderest, the most timid,—all may do this, all may love Christ, and so all may meet in the great home-land and heaven of humanity, which is the peace and nurture of being loved by God.

For the Love of God is broader
  Than the measures of man's mind;
And the Heart of the Eternal
  Is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple,
  We should take Him at His word,
And our lives would be all sunshine
  In the sweetness of our Lord.

O Loving Father, Who hast sent Thy Son Jesus Christ to die on the Cross for us, give me grace to see in that great offering Thy Love for us, and to love Thee through Him by the power of the Holy Ghost, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Sunday in Lent.

They say unto Him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.—MATT., xx., 33.

IN every land, clothed with all sorts of garbs, with every kind of nobleness and meanness in their faces, how the great needy multitude sit by the waysides of humanity, where the Lord of Humanity must walk! And there is no one of all these needy suppliants who has it not in his power to pray a smaller or a larger prayer,—to pray a prayer, that is, which either asks merely for some endowment or adornment of the life, or a prayer which asks for an elevation and alteration of the life itself, such as shall correspond to the gift of the new sense of sight which the Saviour heard the blind men ask at Jericho . . . "Lord, that our eyes might be opened," "Lord, that we might receive our sight!" "Our sight!" How deep these words are with which St. Mark tells the same story! *Our* sight,—a sight which, though we never saw with it, is really ours,—the sight with which we were made to see.

The consciousness of men who knew that the vision-power was a part of their humanity—this, joined to the accepted testimony of seeing men that *they* really *did* see, made these two blind men ready for the miracle of Christ.

This is what makes men believe that they can be Christians, and makes them cry out to Christ. The world is full of men like them, whom He has saved; and in the depths of their own souls they feel the power of being saved, the power of holy love and of fight with and ultimate escape from sin. These are the things which every man may have; therefore for no man is the cry to Christ impossible. Therefore, however men are living prayerlessly or praying little prayers, there is no one of them so hopeless that at any moment the greater prayer—the prayer for Life, the prayer for God—may not burst from his wondering lips: Lord, make me a new man! Lord, give me Thy new life! Lord, that my eyes may be opened—that I may receive my sight!

Not once in all the Gospels is it written that Christ passed by a prayer like that, and did not answer it. He never did; He never will. "So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him!" . . .

These men could see. Their blindness had departed. But how dazed they must have been! How strange it must all have seemed! All their seeing life lay before them. Their work was to be done. No more sitting in the soft sunshine, under the pleasant trees, with outstretched hands asking for alms; no more saying to themselves: "Oh, there is no work for *me* to do, for I am blind!" Strangely intensifying and yet sobering the joy of their new vision! There must have come over these men the sense that it was not *only light* which Christ had given them, that all the work of light-seeing men, the toil of self-support, the meeting of responsibilities and duties, must belong to them. There was bravery in that! It was good for them, in the flood of the new light which came laden with Christ's love, to see also how much there was for them to do, what a life there was for them to live.

And it is good for us. You have prayed the great prayer, and it has been answered. The doors of the new life have been opened to you, and you are a Christian. How good it is for you that on the very threshold of that life, and away on to the very end of it, it is all thronged with work and duty!

Do you sometimes almost turn back, and almost wish the great prayer had not been prayed? "Oh,

for the sunny roadside, and the pennies dropped into the open hand, and the calm days when no one asked of me any duty, and I asked none of myself!" But just as two things must have checked in those blind men any such low regrets,—just as, whenever their foolish, bewildered hearts looked back, they must have gazed up at the sun, and then into the face of Him who had given them the sunshine,—so it must be with you. Look round upon the life itself, and see how glorious and beautiful it is, after all, for a human soul to try to be brave and pure and holy, and full of help to other souls; and then turn and look up into the dear, great face of Him who bade you undertake this life; and these two things, the essential beauty of a holy life and the love of Christ, will drive the baser thoughts away, and set the face unflinchingly toward the celestial light.

Pray the largest prayers. You cannot think a prayer so large that God, in answering it, will not wish that you had made it larger. Pray not for crutches but for wings! Oh, do not pray just that God will keep you from breaking down, and somehow, anyhow, help you to stagger and stumble through; pray for His light and life to come and fill you, that you may live like Him; that you may

tread temptation under foot and walk across it into holiness; that you may be enthusiastically good; that you may shine forth with His light on other lives; that, whatever comes—and He alone knows what is to come,—whatever comes of trial, doubt, perplexity, failure, as well as of success and faith and hope and joy, it may all work together to make your soul fit, first to receive, and then to shine forth with, the light of God.

May God give us all grace to pray that prayer!

Of what supreme, almighty power
  Is Thy great arm, which spans the east and west,
And tacks the centre to the sphere!
  By it do all things live their measured hour:
We cannot ask the thing which is not there,
  Shaming the shallowness of our request!

Almighty God, the Fountain of all wisdom, Who knowest our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking; we beseech Thee to have compassion on our infirmities; and those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday after the Third Sunday.

And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.—DEUT., xxxiii., 4.

THERE must have been in Moses' mind, when he thought over his life, a strong consciousness of the opportunities of inward and spiritual culture which God had opened to him even in and through the failure of his plan of life. . . . In his repentance and confession of personal sin, he had come nearer to Jehovah than when he received his commission at the burning bush, or when he abode forty days in the mingled cloud and glory on Mount Sinai. And now, as the result of all, a patient, loving confidence in God; a deep distrust of himself; a craving for inner purity more than for any outward glory; a pure, deep love overrunning with gratitude for forgiveness, which had deepened with every deepening appreciation of the sin,—all this was fill-

ing the heart of the venerable man as he went forth with God, pondering the failure of his life.

And this same richness of comfort has come to many a man out of the failure of his hopes. You come up to the certainty that you are not going to accomplish that which you once meant to do, that which you might have done if you had not wilfully sinned. You take your last fond look on the Canaan of accomplishment which you are not to enter. You say, "I shall never do what I dreamed of doing," but at the same time there rises up in you another strong assurance,—"God has done in me what I do not see how He could have done except out of my broken hopes and foiled endeavors." You are not glad that you have sinned; you are sure all the time that, if you could have stood sinless, some nobler character still would have been trained in you, but you never can think of your sin without feeling alongside of it all that God has done for you through it. The culture of penitence is there, the dearer, nearer sense of God which has come from so often going to Him with a broken heart, the yearning for an hourly dependence on Him, the craving, almost agonizing knowledge of the goodness of holiness which only came to you when you lost it, the value of spiritual life above all

visible and physical delight or comfort, and a gratitude for forgiveness which has turned the whole life into a psalm of praise or a labor of consecration,— these are the cultures by which God bears witness of Himself to numberless lives that have failed of their full achievement.

But take another thought. The whole question of how much Moses knew of immortality is very indistinct, but it is impossible to think that, . . . in this supreme moment his great soul did not attain to the great, universal human hope. It must have come to him that this which seemed like an end was not an end; that while the current of the Jewish History swept on without him, for him too there was a future, a life to live, a work to do *somewhere*, with the God who took him by the hand and led him away. . . . And as the scene grew dim and misty, and Canaan floated more and more indistinct before his darkening eyes, the vision of the other life grew brighter, and the hands which had been almost torn away from their beloved labor here were reached out, full of the skill which that toil had taught them, for their everlasting task.

And here must always be the final explanation, the complete and satisfying explanation of human failures. Without this truth of another life, there

can be no clearness; all is dreary darkness. A man has failed in all the purposes of his life. . . . What is there left for him? He dwells upon the culture which has come to him in and from his failure, . . . but what of *him*,—this precious human thing, this single personal existence, the soul with all its life and loves? Is that indeed just thrown aside like a dead cinder, out of which all the power has been burnt.

Then comes Christ's truth of immortality. Not so! This failure is not final. The life that has so fallen short is not yet done. It has been tried and found wanting. But by its own consciousness of weakness it is made ready for a new trial in a higher strength. It has learned humility, self-distrust, dependence on God; with these new equipments it will start afresh, and out of failure will come at last success. That is the truth which deepest and warmest lays itself on the disappointed heart, and makes it glow again.

And so the whole story of a man's life is not told when it is simply written of him that he was found unworthy, and did not do the thing which he set out to do. Oh, bear me witness, all of you men and women who have hoped and failed, that that first fact of failure is true of all of us! The only

escape from it is in low, poor ambitions that do not fail only because they never aspire. But the real question is: How does your failure leave you? Are you conscious of culture? glorying in God? glad to see others do the work which you cannot do? and ready for the new career in the other life? If that be your condition, then your failure is redeemed. The sands will run out unnoticed here, but God makes ready a place for that new work which has grown possible through the failure of the old. "This my son was dead and is alive again," He says; "he was lost and is found." He tenderly buries the old life in forgiveness, and opens before the new life the gates of hope.

To know these truths by heart is to assure the richness, the happiness, and the ultimate success of life. They are the truths of Moses, but they are also the truths of Christ. The song of Moses is also the song of the Lamb. May He teach them to all of us who have yet our lives to live!

For to the faithful there is no such thing
As disappointment; failures only bring
A gentle pang, as peacefully they say,
"His purpose stands, though mine has passed away."

All is fulfilling, all is working still,
To teach thee flexibility of will;

To great achievements let thy wishes soar,
Yet meek submission pleases Christ still more.

O Blessed Spirit, Lord and Life-giver, forsake me not, though in my folly I may have grieved Thee. Teach me still, warn me still, guide me still, so that I may advance more and more in the path of a holy life, until I come to Thine everlasting kingdom; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Tuesday after the Third Sunday.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love.—JOHN, xv., 10.

THERE is another word of Christ, spoken on the same evening [of the institution of the Lord's Supper], which we can hardly help taking in connection with this. It is that in which He states exactly the converse of what this verse declares. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love," He says here; "If ye love me, keep my commandments," He had said just before. See how the two belong together! Love utters itself in Duty, and Duty strengthens Love. If Duty grows weak, it must climb to the Fountain-head of Love, and drink. If Love grows doubtful and hesitates, it must lean and steady itself on the strong staff of Duty.

You see how it all points to the beautiful completeness of the world, in which there comes no love

without its duty, and no duty without its love. It is a most inspiring thought, that never yet did God put any high emotion in the soul of any of His children that God's world did not instantly stand before that child with a duty in its hand, saying, "This is the task which belongs to your new emotion. Do this task and the emotion shall be really yours; not merely the fleeting gleam of a passing sunbeam on your bosom, but the settled warmth of a perpetual sunshine in your heart." How invariable that is! Never does a new love descend from Heaven that a new duty does not spring out of the earth. God fills your soul with pity, and the beggar instantly knocks at your gate. God gives you courage, and the haunted wretch flees under your strong arm for protection. God gives you light, and the cloud of some ignorance rolls up out of the night, demanding your daylight for its dispersion.

And if the love hesitates, if it does not see or does not like its task, if it prefers to turn its gaze inward and feast on its own beauty, if it is content with simply loving—what then? Why, it perishes! O you who are to-day wondering where your faith has gone, remember! when God gave you *faith*, He gave you also *commandment*. On that bright morning when you believed something enthusiastically, a

duty, something to *do*, sprang into existence as the brother, the twin, of your belief. Did you bid them embrace? Did you give them to one another? Did you say to your faith, "Go, justify and confirm your life by doing *that*"? If you did not, it is no wonder that your faith has faded and is almost gone. It is not yet too late; go, run to it with its duty as you would run to a starving man with bread. *Do something* with your religion, and your religion will not die.

"As I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love," said Jesus;—how graciously He uses His own experience to strengthen ours! Not even the love which was between the Father and the Son, He says, is so exalted as to outgo this law,—that duty and love belong together. Even the eternal abiding of the Son in the bosom of the Father's affection has to feed itself on the Son's doing of the commandments of the Father. Who, then, are you and I that we should think that everlasting law can be suspended or restrained for us? Who are we that we should think that in us the fire of love can burn without the fuel of duty?

O Thou in whom we live and move,
Whose love is law, whose law is love,
Whose present Spirit waits to fill

The soul that comes to *do Thy will!*
Unto our waiting spirits teach
Thy love beyond the power of speech,
And bid us feel with joyful awe
The omnipresence of Thy law!

O God, Fountain of Love and Source of Law; grant that in obeying I may know Thy love, and that in loving I may fulfil Thy law: Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday after the Third Sunday.

The beauty of holiness.—Ps. xxix., 2.

MEN have debated what constituted beauty, and been as far from agreeing on its theory as they were unanimous in recognizing its dominion. Without entering deeply into the metaphysics of the matter, we may say in general that the theories of beauty which men have held are mostly reducible to three, which may be called the Absolute, the Ideal, and the Utilitarian. . . . If there be beauty in a pure and pious life, shall we not see it unfolding itself and answering in its own way to each of these different conceptions of what beauty is, so that he who judged beauty absolutely, or ideally, or by utility, should find something truly beautiful in a goodness inspired by the love of God,—for that is what we mean by holiness.

It is a truth that is attested by all the history of man living with his fellow-man, that there is in human nature a spiritual æsthetic sense which takes

pleasure in the sight of simple goodness, just as there is a taste which delights in the beautiful curves and colors of material things. It is in man, untainted and unspoiled, to be stirred into pleasure by a pure, good life in a way that will give no other account of itself but just this—that the thing is spiritually beautiful and appeals to a spiritual power in us that apprehends its beauty. . . . It is this *absolute*, self-testifying beauty of the holy lives which has been the strong extensive power of Christianity. It is the power of the Sainthoods. There is that in man to which they everlastingly appeal. It ought to make any man tremble for his own nature if they do not appeal to him. If any man pointed to the blue winter sky and said, "How beautiful it is!" and you could see no loveliness there, you would not dare to deny that it was lovely, but would have to feel that you were growing blind. So if a holy life has no charm for you, it is you and not the holy life that is dishonored. You ought to grow anxious, very anxious, for your own soul.

Each of us has in his own heart some outline, some suggestion of the best humanity. . . . When holiness shines out before us in some holy man, it is not something foreign, unfamiliar. It is recognized as the completion of what we have

known so incompletely. It is the fulfilment of a thousand prophecies, the *ideal* after which the real in us has been so blindly struggling. Think of St. John. Have you never known, as you read his Revelation, that here, in the great radiance of the spirit that surrounded him, was the full glory of those stray and sickly beams that through your murky atmosphere had fallen on your life? Just in proportion as a man has really struggled will he see the beauty of the full success. And when a man, charmed with the ideal beauty of a holy life, starts out afresh, encouraged by the sight of perfectness, and dedicates his life anew to God, enthusiastic, earnest, all afire with hope—then he is worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

So holiness in the world *helps men.* It is not merely a light hung out, however brilliant, to attract their admiration. The same new sort of beauty that the stars acquired when men passed from regarding them as merely brilliant spots in space, and saw that they could use them, could steer under their guidance over the midnight sea,—that same new sort of beauty holiness obtains when any man begins to see that it is not only a wonderful phenomenon, not merely an accidental and delightful meeting of certain qualities, but may be an inspira-

tion and a help to him. Close by your side, a fellow-man is living a self-sacrificing, patient, godly, manly life. You know that it is beautiful; but some day you drop discouraged, and that strong life beside you gathers you up and sets you on your feet; or, better still, some day something makes you aware that that holiness which you have been living with has been helping you all the way along, when you never dreamed of it. Tell me, has it not grown more beautiful, has not a warmth and dearness entered into the light with which it shone before?

In illustration of all this let us think a moment of the holiness of Jesus. One thing is sure, that in the holiest life the world has ever known men have seen also the most beautiful life. All the different theories of beauty that men have found are satisfied by that supreme excellence of Jesus. The absoluteness of beauty is seen in the instinctive and unreasoning way with which the Life of the Gospels has enchained the world's affection. It has found out the spiritual æsthetic faculty in man. Children have felt its beauty. Theologies have wrapped their mists of speculation round it, but lying behind all, it has pierced through and found men's hearts, and told them of its beauty.

And then the ideal beauty of the holiness of Jesus, that, too, has not been hidden. With wonderful clearness men are seeing in Him every day the perfectness of all their imperfection. "Why, that is I, only completely and absolutely pure!" the soul says when it sees Jesus struggling with temptation, or pitying a sufferer, or going to His death in agony.

And what shall we say about the beauty of utility? Every one who has used Jesus knows it, every one who has trusted Him in perplexity, leaned on Him in weakness, drank of His consolations in trouble, clung to Him in the hour of death. That is a beauty that will not come out to us perfectly till in some other world we shall see how much He has helped us, and own His perfect beauty in the light of our complete salvation.

The prophet Zechariah has a strange verse in which he tells how he brought the people who were entrusted to him to the Lord,—"I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty and the other I called Bands." Beauty and Bands, Beauty and Duty, so God rules the world! He would rather tempt us with His beauty than bind us with His bands; it is better to be urged on by the inspirations than to be driven by the compulsions of

holiness. There is a great lack among us of the enthusiasm of consecration, the enthusiasm of God. When I think how our lives might be psalms, how, going on after Christ our Master, we might be filled with the joy of honoring such a Leader and entering daily into such a Life,—then these days which we do live, even the very best of them, seem dull and spiritless. By all your dissatisfactions, by every glimpse that you have ever had that you were made for better things, I call on you to open your eyes to the tawdriness, the ugliness of a worldly life! And then before you burns the Beauty of Holiness. Perfectly independent of our temporal conditions, shining alike in rich and poor, not quenched by trouble, not outshone by joy, visible to God even when no man sees it, and at last made clearer and not dimmer by the river that we all must cross—that is possible for every one of you. In that beauty worship the Lord. For the deepening of that beauty in our own lives, let us pray and strive and sacrifice everything besides. Let sin grow more and more ugly as we come more and more into the light. So, here and hereafter, we shall have only one wish, only one petition, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

We, too, would wear unspotted
The garments of the King,
Would have the royal perfume
About our path to cling,
And unto all beholders
A lilied beauty bring.

Open mine eyes, O Lord, to see Thy beauty, and seeing it to love it, and loving it to follow after it, that so I may come at last to Thy heavenly kingdom, to see Thee face-to-face in Thy beauty, O King of Kings; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit art one God, world without end. Amen.

Thursday after the Third Sunday.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright.—Ps., xxxiii., 1.

With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.—Isa., xii., 3.

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.—Rom., xv., 13.

There is an old question which is constantly appearing in the minds of thoughtful people;—it is the question how far the deeper purpose of life needs to be a conscious and constantly remembered thing. Is it possible and is it good that in your learning, your working, or your suffering, you should have present with you the idea that each of them is of value for something deeper than itself, and should be constantly asking yourself whether that deeper something has been reached? Or is it best that you should just forget the deeper purpose, and, perfecting the form of life as thoroughly as possible, should trust the purpose, of itself, to send its power through the perfected form? No man may undertake to

make a large rule which shall apply to all; but certainly to nine men out of ten the ever-constant need is of some such thoughtfulness about the final purpose of life as can only be reached by the great Christian truth that man is made to be, and by Christ's regeneration ought to become, the son of God.

And one of the clearest places where this need appears is in the lack of that buoyancy and freshness, combined with and largely dependent upon quick, large sympathy, which is so wofully lacking in many an intelligent, conscientious, patient man. The intelligent man turns into a pedant, the conscientious man turns into a drudge, the patient man grovels like a worm. . . . Though we give them all our praise, we come in the course of time to expect most of the buoyancy and interest of life, not from them, but from their opposites, from the man who seeks no higher knowledge, who owns no rigid service to duty, and who lightly tosses off all his burdens. But yet the higher lives, the lives of conscientiousness, certainly *must* be capable of a freshness and a buoyancy that is wholly beyond the power of any light irresponsibility. God's life is the fountain and mainspring of the universe. And what the dull scholar, the mechanical plodder and the

dogged sufferer need, to make their lives bright and their doing of their several duties beautiful, is not more levity but more profoundness; not less seriousness, but more. Oh! it seems to me as if there were few things in the world that are more sad than the dreariness of many good people, who have lost the superficial charm which people have, no doubt, that live only in the senses, and have not reached the true attractiveness of men who are living in the conscience and the soul. Their fellows shake their heads at them and call them "too good," and in a certain sense they are right. These people are "too good" for the life of butterflies, but the real secret of their dreariness is that they are not good enough. They have not reached the central seriousness of living, wherein is joy and brightness and perpetual enthusiasm. It is the half-seriousness that is gloomy. The full seriousness, the life lived in its deepest consciousness, is as full of joy as it is full of soberness. You leave the earth with its bright flowers behind you as you rise; you find yourself among the clouds, and then you think how bright the earth was, and lament the duty that carries you into such unpleasant places; but you rise still, and soon, beyond the clouds, there are the sunlight and the illimitable ether full of peace.

And so I am sure that the peace of any man's soul who has outgrown mere self-indulgence, can only come by going forward—on into the deepest principles and final causes of the things he does. Put God underneath all your life, and your life must rest on the everlasting arms.

> . . . Because that I have had
> Delights that should have made to overflow
> My cup of gladness, and have not been glad,
> All in the midst of plenty poor I live.

O God, grant that the Sun of Righteousness may never cease to shine within my heart, and to fill me with continual joy. And so may the desert places of my nature rejoice and blossom as the rose, and the earthly within me be changed into the heavenly, to Thy praise and glory, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday after the Third Sunday.

He that hath the Son, hath life.—1 JOHN, v., 12.

He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, . . . is passed from death unto life.—JOHN, v., 24.

LIFE was Christ's favorite word. Life was what He was always praising and promising. Life was the test by which He tried all the powers that He met with. If they nourished and increased life, they were good; if they injured and decreased it, they were bad. Life was His own claim and credential. That He gave man life was the ground of His demand for men's allegiance; that He saved them from death was the burden of His self-assertion. He was divine; He was eternal; all vitality was at its perfection in Him, infinite, imperishable. We should have to be something like Him, catch something of His feeling about the beauty and gloriousness of life, before we could feel the horror which He constantly sums up into that word, death, as the mere negative of life. But this we can do,

we can feel how one great difference between Jesus and most of the other teachers who have bidden men abstain from sin is that while they decried sin because it brought pain, or because it hurt other people, or because it destroyed order, or because it was unlovely, Christ is supreme in this idea, which runs through every word He speaks—that sin is dreadful because it is death, because it is so much cut out of the world's and the man's vitality, because it is destruction of the very essence of manhood, because to do wrong as a man is, in so far, to cease to live as a man. That is Christ's idea. That is what He is always insisting upon when He calls goodness life and wickedness death. That was the reason why, from the heights of His divinity and thrilling with the consciousness of immortality, He hated wickedness and loved goodness as no other being ever has, and why He was willing to die in what we call death, if thereby He could save men from that wickedness which was the death He really dreaded for them.

It is hard to over-estimate the change that would come to us and our way of looking at life if we got thoroughly into us the idea which, it seems to me, was beyond all question Christ's idea, and is involved in his use of the words *life* and *death*. What does He mean when He calls goodness life, and wicked-

ness death? Is it a hard and barren statement that life is the consequence of goodness, and death is the consequence of sin, that God means to kill the wicked and save the good alive? "Goodness is life," says Jesus; "wickedness is death." Must He not mean that the essence, the primary idea, the deepest meaning of human life is goodness? That was what God made man for. That is his essential existence. Not to be good, then, to be wicked, is to fail of this essential existence; it is not to live, it is to die. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die,"—is that a threat? Is it not the deep utterance of a truth? Indeed, there cannot be a threat that is not the deep utterance of a truth, for no man can permanently suffer except by the eternal necessities of things,—not by whim, but by law. Is it not, then, as if it said, "The soul that sinneth *dies*, dies *in* its sinning, dies because for a soul there is no life but holiness?" As a stream that flows no longer ceases to be a stream, as the sun that shines no longer is no longer a sun, as the tree that buds and blooms no more is no more a tree, so the man who has ceased to be good has ceased to be a man; just so far as he has ceased to be good, he has ceased to be a man.

We write upon the pages of our copy-books, "To err is human." It has a truth in it, but it is a

superficial truth. It means that the *habit* of humanity is to err. Christ comes and says, "To do right is human," declaring the profound truth. He means that the purpose and nature of humanity is to do right. To sin is to fail of human life. That is what He surely means when He calls sin death. It was the same truth that His Incarnation uttered, put into words which were continually upon the lips of the Incarnate.

It is good to turn the truth the other way for a moment, and see what it can teach us. "To sin is just so far to cease to live," we said, catching Christ's idea. May we not also say, "To cease to live is just so far to sin"? There are a multitude of useless lives around us of which, when we are asked, "Are such lives wicked?" we reply, "Oh, no; they do no harm." We cannot say that they do any good, indeed. They are self-indulgent; they have no enterprise; they have but very little real vitality of brain or heart, or even of body. We rather hesitate when we are asked to call them good lives; but no! they are not wicked, certainly.

But, in the light of what Christ teaches about the connection of vitality and goodness, they *are* wicked. Do you remember, in the Parable, it is not for a misused but a disused talent that the poor servant is

cast into outer darkness? The young man who has refused to use his brain about anything, and so stands to-day without a single intelligent opinion about those things that are of eternal consequence, —the man who does no duty because he has taught other men and himself to look upon him as an unenterprising, good-natured mortal to whom they are to bring no duties,—the creature who sometimes ventures to demand our respect for the very qualities which make him contemptible, who is conservative because radicalism is troublesome and calm because enthusiasm is a bore;—all these, when we see them as Christ sees them, we shall know are wicked men. The lazy and labor-saving saint is a sinner. The man who is not vitally good, is bad, for he is shutting his heart against the work of Him who came that men might have *life*.

God teach us all that to be alive is the first condition of being good!

O Thou from whom all life doth flow,
In whom doth life begin,
Make all our deeds with life to glow;
Be nothing dead but sin!

Be Thou in us the life to will,
The eager life to do;

Thy life through all our living thrill,
And still our life renew

Till life goes on by life's increase
To fuller life above;
Where life is light and joy and peace;
And, best of all, is love.

O Lord Jesus, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind, to the lifeless impart life, to the living increase life: for Thou Thyself art the Life, and apart from Thee we have no life. Amen.

Saturday after the Third Sunday.

As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.—JOHN, v., 26.

Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die.—JOHN, xi., 26.

THE life Christ gives to us is not a new creation, but an impartation of the life which is already in Him. Men are learning to-day that, all through the world of physical life, there is never any creation of force: it is transmitted and transmuted. It passes into new conditions, and shows itself in new forms; but it is always the same essential force still. And Religion, rejoicing in this great discovery, calls this one force that lives in many forms the Will of God. So Christ teaches us that there are not many goodnesses in the world, but only one Goodness, and that any goodness springing up to-day in any man's heart, and taking some new, beautiful, strange shape, is not a new creation. It is but the transmitted goodness of the All-good. It is the eternal

and universal light finding its way into one more dark corner, and clothing one more hitherto unlighted thing with a color of its own. There is but one light in the world—not many, though there be a thousand colors.

It is strange to think how man's mind has always held by this idea—that life was transmitted, but not created. It has held *that* to be true of life in all its grades, even in the most palpable physical life. Man has an instinctive dislike to a notion of spontaneous generation; it seems to break into fragments his notion of vitality. The child's life is a perpetuation of the father's. Each generation transmutes the vitality of the generation before it into some new shape. Skill passes from teacher to scholar. Courage passes from the strong heart to the weak heart as they press each other in a human embrace. Enthusiasm springs from eye to eye, as the spark leaps from one electric point to another. Everywhere the transmission of life, not the creation of life!

And so when a man becomes good, what is it? Not a spontaneous generation; not a sheer leaping up of flame as if there had never been any fire in the universe before, but a transmission of the Eternal Goodness,—a repetition in the soul of that which took place in the body when, in the mysterious words

of Genesis, "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

Is that conceivable? Is it credible? Let us understand always that the picture of what Christ does for us in our salvation is before us all the time in what men do for one another. So long as we see men give themselves to one another and the power of one man pass into another man's life, so long it cannot be unintelligible or incredible that Christ gives Himself to us; so long as one illuminated object casts light on another, so long can I believe that the sun casts his light on them all,—Christ gives us His life. You cannot give another what you have not yourself. You cannot put power into the wheel that you turn that is not first in the arm with which you turn it; you cannot put beauty in the house you build that is not first in the soul with which you plan it. It is your strength in the wheel when men see it turning; it is your beauty that is in the house as men delight in it. And so it is Christ's righteousness which clothes the righteous soul here, and in which it stands, happy and pure and meritless, at last. "He that hath the Son, hath life." There has been no addition to the total amount of goodness in the universe. There has been only the imparting of His goodness to new beings, the shining

of the light upon new surfaces. For God is infinite; He is all the good that is possible; nothing can be added to Him. And when that sweet, mysterious change takes place, and the little child or the old man becomes holy, it is his turning to God and receiving part of the holiness which has been in the world from all eternity. It is not a new creation, created by his resolve; it is his giving himself to Christ, so that Christ can give Himself to him.

And this gift of Himself has its analogies and illustrations in all the ways in which men give their lives to one another. Strangely, all these analogies and illustrations include another truth which comes to its fulness when Christ gives His life to men,— the truth of the necessity of sacrifice. If it be so (and is it not ?) that constantly men and women can give what is best in themselves to other men and women only with suffering, then it surely is not strange to find that Christ could not give Himself to man without a pain that is the central tragedy of human history. He could not give Himself *to* us without giving Himself *for* us. The Fountain out of which we were to drink until it became in us a well of water springing up to everlasting life, could spring only from the foot of the Cross whereon He died. That is a deep mystery, but it is a mystery

whose faint echoes I find everywhere where man gives his life to man, and so a mystery whose wonder kindles and does not quench my love.

Christ gives men life. But the only life He knows or cares to give men is goodness. That goodness He gives to them by giving Himself for them. So the pain of the Incarnation is bound close to the joy of the Incarnation; you cannot separate them; the Cross belongs with the Transfiguration. The angels who watch in Gethsemane are the same angels who sang in Bethlehem, and the life of Jesus completes and glorifies the life of every son of God who, trying to make his brethren "have life," enters into some feeble but real share both of the pain and the delight of the Redeemer.

> 'T is the sublime of man,
> Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves
> Parts and proportions of one glorious whole!
> This fraternizes man; this constitutes
> Our charities and bearings. But 't is God
> Diffused through all that doth make all one whole.

O Jesus, the Fountain of all good, the Fountain of life, the Fountain of sweetness, the Fountain of grace, the Fountain of eternal wisdom, most mercifully pour down on me now the gift of heavenly grace; and teach me ever to thank Thee, and to give myself up to Thee above all, because this is the dearest offering I can make. Amen.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Then, on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.—GEN., xxii., 4.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.—HEB., xi., 13.

THINK of the power of anticipation everywhere. Think of the difference it would make to us if events rose above the horizon of our lives with no twilight that announced their coming. God has given man the powers which compel him to anticipate the future *for something*. The lower animals do not have it. They play "regardless of their fate," and they walk into the midst of the deepest happiness of which their nature is capable with precisely the same unhoping, unfearing, unanticipating stolidity with which they walk up to torture and to death. But when you look at man's life, you feel in a minute a certain richness of tone, a certain deeper hue of life which comes in large part from this—that the man is living always in anticipation, that the things

which we are doing at any one moment are always bathed in a color that comes from the world of what we expect to do, and that the feet are always treading with a reluctance or a spring, getting their whole movement from something that we can see afar off as we lift our eyes.

Sometimes a great coming joy is seen afar off. Every step we take is bringing us to it; we feel its breath upon our cheek; its light is in our eyes as we advance. What then? When it comes, it will be full of education, we are sure. God will have something to teach us by it. If we think at all, we know well enough what happiness is sent for; we know that its lesson is gratitude. We know that God means by it to lay a great weight of sunlight upon the icy obstinacy of our lives that His bitter winds have only stiffened into a harder stiffness, and melt it away. But is it for nothing that He lets us see it in the distance? Is it not a part of His culture that He allows us to anticipate a coming blessing? The more we look at men, the more we know it is good for us to see our joys beforehand. Sudden joy is apt to be feverish and excited. We leap suddenly into happiness, and it seems as if it were an accident. To be sure we call such sudden, unexpected happiness a "God-send," but see how the word

has lost its meaning and hardly signifies anything but chance. But when a man goes on, day after day, week after week, walking straight up towards a great delight that stands there waiting for him, the excitement has time to die away, the fever can subside, and a calm, placid, earnest sense of "How good God is to me!" comes gradually and folds him around. O you who are anticipating happiness, be sure that you get the culture of your anticipation. It is a great, solemn thing to be happy when all happiness—from the joy of health up to the bliss of salvation—all means a loving God. We are too frivolous about our joy. We think of sorrow only as serious and deep. We go tinkling the bells that ought to ring with litanies. Humility, trust, consecration—these belong in God's intention to the happy no less, perhaps more, than to the suffering moments of our life.

Else where would be the culture of a promised Heaven? There is one chapter in the Bible—the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews—whose whole burden is that—the power of anticipated joy. The old saints are seen, one by one, lifting up their eyes and seeing the Place afar off. We do not step all at once across the line and find ourselves in an unexpected Heaven. It has trained us for

itself by promising us itself all the way. God grant that we may all be ripening under that culture now!

But turn the picture: What shall we say about anticipated sorrow and suffering? Before you there has risen the image of a suffering that is coming to you just as surely as the night is coming over this brilliant afternoon. It is very far off, but you see its certainty. And from the moment you saw it first (whatever it is—a disease, or poverty, or the death of your best friend without whom life is death for you—anything that it pierces your heart to think of) —from the moment you saw it your whole life was altered. You will never again be what you have been. . . .

What are you going to be? There are three lives before you. You may turn away your eyes from the coming suffering, and never let them rest there, and make believe that you forget it; but there it will be all the time, and you will always know that it is. That is the worst and most harassing life that one can lead. You may stare it right in the eyes and defy it. You may begin to talk of cruel destiny; substituting a superficial fatalism for the superficial optimism that has answered your purposes thus far. You may try to make yourself hard, and you may

succeed; and if you do, your success will be the most terrible ruin that could befall you. . . .

There is another way. You may look at it, and look *through* it, and find God behind it. What do we mean by all the little lines we draw across the Omnipotence of Love, and say, "God cannot bless me *here*." There is a patient familiarity with the coming suffering that makes a soul, when it comes, leap into its arms and welcome it. Such change of aspect comes to us not only in the experience but in the anticipation of sorrow. "No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." All those stages of discipline may come while you expect suffering as well as while you suffer, if you are docile enough; and then when the suffering is reached, there is nothing there to terrify you, nothing but the "peaceable fruits."

There is one anticipation that all must have—the looking forward to death. St. Paul tells about men who through fear of death are all their life "subject to bondage"; dare we call it a foolish timidity? Without it where would come out that large power of solemnity and sweetness which is in every man's nature, but which with nine men out of ten you

cannot touch except by some reminder of their coming death? . . . The truest Christian may still shrink from the last agony and the dark grave. It ought not to make him doubt his Christianity if he does. His understanding of death is reserved for him until he can look at it from the inner side. But do not feel that you *ought* to dread it. Just for that terror it is shown to you long before, that you may lose sight of how terrible the servant of your Father is, and even think him beautiful from long associating him with the beautiful service to which he is appointed.

I beg you to live far-looking lives. Lift up your eyes and see the places afar off. You may not see all the way between, but keep your eyes forward still. The present cannot be known or done except by the future's interpretation and inspiration. And no man can know the future rightly except as he knows it in Him who is the Lord of all our lives, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

When Abraham came to the place afar off which he had dreaded,—the place of sacrifice,—the sacrifice was not needed; there was the ram in the thicket, and the boy was free. It all recalls another sacrifice;—Christ dreaded His crucifixion; He saw

it as He came to it. *He* did not escape, "When they came to the hill Calvary, there they crucified Him." But if there was no escape, there was victory; "He was crucified, dead, and buried," but "the third day He rose." In all the places that are before us, we shall either be delivered by Christ or be conquerors in Christ; either He will take the temptation or the suffering out of the way of His servant, as He did for Abraham; or He will make us victors over temptation and suffering, as He was Himself. What does it matter which? Nay, is not the last the best way? Since our victory is made sure by His victory, why should we not "rejoice when we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, we may be glad with exceeding joy?"

Our whole anticipation,
Our Master's best reward,
Our crown of bliss, is summed in this—
"For ever with the Lord!"

Almighty God, unto whose everlasting blessedness we ascend, not by the frailty of the flesh, but by the activity of the soul; make me ever by Thy inspiration to anticipate the things which Thou dost promise, that I may be able to perform those which Thou commandest: Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday after the Fourth Sunday.

An angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water. Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.—JOHN, v., 4.

IT is in general a heavenly element in certain lives that gives those lives the power of expansive blessing. This was made supremely manifest in the Incarnation of Jesus. There was the human life with all its vast capacity lying so dead and helpless till there came into it that which was from outside it and yet which was of it—the divine, the heavenly element which was above the human, and yet with which the human had eternal belongings, to which the human was made to respond. . . . And this is always the renewal of the Incarnation in the personal life; whenever anew the Word comes to dwell with any man; whenever Christ, the Hope and Promise and Power of spiritual glory, comes to dwell in any man, then for that man the miracle is

wrought which was wrought for the world in Bethlehem. The troubled waters of his life are clothed with power. His experiences become significant, and reach forth, not by distinct determination, but by the new, expansive Christhood in them, to bear their witness and bring their help to other men.

What a vast difference there is between the influences that two men of marked success exercise in a community! One man's success in business runs down like a blight and a discouragement through every store in the trade. Another man's succeeding is like a trumpet call all along the line. There are masters in every profession who make their profession seem larger, there are others who make their profession seem smaller, because of their succeeding in it. Sometimes, in your great woe, you step into your neighbor's house, all rich and warm and happy and abloom with children, and it makes your desolation and bereavement easier to bear; then you step across another neighbor's threshold, and his thronged and lighted comfort smites you like a blast out of a frozen sea. . . . All of us have had times of grief when we have been filled with the desire to offer other men the rich cup which we knew the Lord was holding to our lips,—times when our pain made prophets of us, and sent us abroad to

speak the word of the Lord which we felt spoken sweet to us in every consecrated pang. A heavenly element had come here and there into the sorrow which our life has known, an element composed of the clear and satisfied knowledge that the sorrow came from God, and the development by the sorrow of what was best and most God-like in us; and wherever that element was in our pain, whoever has touched our pain has found the puzzle of his life grow clearer, and the bitterness of his life grow sweet.

The truth, I hope, is clear. It is not every sorrow that helps the sorrowing; not every success inspires courage; not every joy makes the joyless lift up their heads; all these experiences are of the earth and earthy, mere pools of water, until the angel's touch falls on them, until the heavenly element comes into them. Then, as it is told in our parable, the waters of the pool are troubled; up from the depths of the suffering or rejoicing man comes that in which he is the son of God—his faith, his hope, his tenderness, his insight. That mingles with the divine purpose for which the experience has come to him, and in these two lies the power of blessing for men's souls.

One word more. Whosoever stepped in after the

troubling of the waters was cured "*of whatsoever disease he had.*" It was not one kind of trouble only that the inspired water touched. Whatever woe man's poor body could feel this blessed pool could cure. And so, to read it into the spiritual parable for which we have made it stand, any experience of ours, once made helpful by the heavenly element, has a strange universalness. It can help men who are pressing through experiences totally unlike itself. Souls in full tide of joy have subtle gospels for the poor discouraged, broken men who lie beside the road through which they pass. Unquestioning believers have cheer to drop into the cup of souls all harassed and distressed by doubt. Who has not been surprised by finding that men who seemed as far off from him as an Alpine summit had sent down streams of help into his life! This is the way in which the single, special life of Jesus has helped all the world. All woe is one at its heart, and all divine help is one, and so any helpfulness in man which really comes from God can be something to, can do something for, any possible suffering which comes across its path.

There is no use of living if our lives do not help other lives. They must help other lives if in themselves is the power of God. The power of God

comes into men's lives by Christ. To make His ours by obedient love—that is the only true way to ensure that our lives shall not be useless in the world.

I ask thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes,
And a heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

O God, the Strengthener of the soul, I beseech Thee in my weakness to make perfect Thy strength, that by Thy gracious help I may be able to help others, according to the full measure of the opportunity that Thou givest me. Grant it for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday after the Fourth Sunday.

If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?—2 Kings, v., 13.

EVERY man who has watched the workings of his own life will tell us that the little things he has encountered, and not the larger things, are those which have tried him most, and before which he has most often failed. It is the universal experience. The great trials and duties and temptations bring their strength with them; we brace ourselves against them by a natural instinct of opposition, and are strong; but the small trials and temptations find us weak, and bring to us no strength. Something comes to try your temper, if that is your weak point; it is a mighty thing; you can see it in the distance as it comes down on you brandishing its arms like a giant, and thinking to make very easy work of the citadel of your patience,—never very strongly guarded,—and what is the result? The gates close themselves against the coming enemy;

you keep your temper perfectly, and are as calm as a saint. And the next day some wretched little provocation creeps up and steals the keys, and you are in a passion before you dream of it!

Or, think how it is with charity and kindness. A strong demand upon your pity and enterprising benevolence calls up a chivalrous daring, and sinks yourself out of sight, and there is nothing that you would not do for a friend in his great suffering; and yet the little needs that the same friend brings to you in ordinary life encounter only selfishness and petulance. I think there are many men who would go to China for a brother, if he needed it, who will hardly go down the street for him without grumbling,—men who would give up their lives and never think of it, but find it very hard to give five minutes for a friend.

And what is the philosophy of martyrdom? Why is it that men, and even women and children, will walk fearlessly up to the stake or the scaffold and die with psalms on their lips, who had no more courage than their neighbors when the little perils of ordinary life had to be met? The martyrs are not a separate race. . . . In quiet times of quiet duties the level of goodness seems to have sunk, and we think there can be no more martyrs;

but by-and-by the terrible time of terrible duties comes, and men rise to it in a moment, and the martyr-spirit is as plentiful and as glorious as ever it was of old. . . . It is some secret in this wondrous human soul by which it changes at the touch of a new emergency into something new itself. This makes infinite progress conceivable; this makes heaven possible. I cannot but think that in heaven there will be tasks unspeakably harder than any of the little trifles we do here, and yet we shall not groan over them any longer, but do them with angelic ease; for the heavenly task will make heavenly men with heavenly strength.

But *how* do the great tasks of life put strength into us that does not spring to meet the little labors. I think that a large part of the answer lies in the way we look at responsibility. Responsibility, or the whole thought of *being bound*, of owing it to God to do a certain act, is easily adapted to what we call great duties, but does not so readily take hold of the little duties of life; and so the great strength which belongs with "I ought" enters into the great tasks, and they are easy; and it does not get into the little tasks, and they are hard. It is not hard to conceive that I owe it to the Law of God to lay down my life, if it seems needed for the good of

some great cause, and I may do it, filled with enthusiasm when that Law of God presents itself to me in some of its glowing conceptions; but it is hard to believe that the Law of God cares whether I am punctual at my daily humdrum task, whether I speak kindly or crossly to the child that I find fallen in the streets, whether I wrong the tender conscience of a poor, stumbling brother who is looking for the truth, whether I tell this little lie or not. Our whole notion of the Law of God is apt to be too cumbersome and stiff. It fits over the whole world like a mighty dome,—even a single life may be conceived of as so large that the Law of God may fit that as a great protecting roof,—but it does not fold itself easily about single little actions, and so the little actions, freed from the constraint and felt pressure of responsibility, are loose and harder to grasp,—harder to do rightly than the larger ones on which it presses with a recognized authority.

Do you remember what St. Paul said?—"What the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." We have just seen something of what it was that the Law could not do; it could not touch the little duties and condemn the little sins of life. It

could set itself against the course of terrible, headlong crime, but the little faults slipped through. The Law was "weak through the flesh," because it could not fit itself to the intricacies and subtleties of this fleshly life which we live. And what then? God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, —the personal, human Saviour, who could come right into the midst of what men were being and doing with a sympathy and knowledge of them which, while it is comforting and soothing, is convincing, unsparing, and condemning too. Instead of a vague responsibility there came a watchful Love, . . . the presence of the Father *in the house*, among the children, not merely writing upon the walls that to do such and such a thing was wrong, but showing them that it was wrong by His holiness, and persuading them not to do it by His love —*condemning sin in the flesh.*

Here, then, is Salvation. Here is something that goes beyond and completes the work that the Law could not do,—"Christ is the end of the Law." It is the power of personal, discriminating Love. Make this, make *Him* your religion, and then you have got something that is infinitely flexible, and can fit itself to little and large alike. . . . When we do right no longer because we must, but because

He wants us to, and it will disobey and wound Him if we do wrong, then every part of the long line of duty is pressed by the same force. The smaller duties are as much to be done as the larger, since all are to be done not simply with reference to their own fruits, which are insignificant enough even in the greatest, but as symbols of gratitude to Him who has loved us. Every little chance to do His will becomes now an emergency, and so gets all the strength of responsibility that used to belong only to what seemed the great critical acts of life; and so the little, with this new support, is as easy to do as the large.

This is the salvation by the Personal Christ. This is the pure river of the water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, by the side of which grows the tree of life, with its constant fruit!

It may seem a little thing
That you have to do,—
A cup of water to bring,
Or loosen a shoe,—
But if done with a ready will
And a loving spirit, still
It is not little *in you!*

O God, the Strengthener of the soul, in my weakness perfect Thy strength.

Thou appointest my work, strengthen me to bring it to a good end.

Chasten my thoughts by attention to present duty, however lowly or commonplace.

Let me be more anxious to be faithful in little than to have much committed to me.

Grant me grace to do all things to Thy glory, and thereby to my endless peace.

I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, in whose name we cannot ask too much. **Amen.**

Wednesday after the Fourth Sunday.

Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.—HEB., xii., 3.

This shall comfort us concerning our works.—GEN., v., 29.

WHATEVER may be the special aspect that life presents to us, there always is behind it a larger purpose of life of which these special aspects are only exhibitions. That larger purpose is the Reception of God by the soul of Man. To receive God so that our life shall be filled with His life—that is what we are living for. And all that happens to us—either the special events which we encounter, or the larger, general way in which all life presents itself to us—is but the method by which His life is to be poured into ours.

It seems to me that in the deep sense of this truth lie both the dignity and the consolation of our lives, —the dignity of their successes and the consolation of their failures. It is not easy to say which is needed most. When men succeed in what the world

and their ambitions urge them to attempt, I think there almost always comes a certain sense of tawdriness and worthlessness in the result; and this sense is often keenest in the noblest men, keen and deep just in proportion to men's native nobleness and also in proportion to the nobleness of the work in which they have succeeded. The wise man finds it when he has won his learning, the conscientious man when he has done his duty, the patient man when he has borne his pain. In weak, exhausted moments after the victory comes the question whether it is all worth while. It seems as if the mere feat of learning or doing or suffering were like an athlete's triumph, fruitless of real result, and good for nothing but a show. Many and many a busy or patient man's and woman's life is haunted by this sense of tawdriness, this lack of worth and dignity. Where can the rescue come from? If I can learn to know that through my learning, or my work, or my patience, God is really giving Himself to me and making me like Himself,—if then my learning or my work or my patience becomes, not something final but the doorway through which God comes to me, is it not rescued, rescued as the doorway is rescued into dignity by the guest who enters through it, and makes it forever after radiant with his remembered

presence? As the farmer's labor has a dignity which the athlete's contortions never win, so the work that you or I do for the winning of God has its own majesty that work for work's sake can never attain.

And here comes the consolation of the lives that fail, of the parts of our lives which are certainly, indisputably failures. If there is a special form and an unseen purpose to every life, then there is always the hope that though the form of life may be broken the purpose of the life may yet fulfil itself in some other way, even in spite of—nay, through the breakage of—the form.

Suppose I am one of those men whose ideal of life is a perfectly done task, everything fulfilled to the uttermost, the ends all folded in the finished work, to which no judge in all the universe can find a word to say except "Well done." Suppose, with this ideal of life, my real life is a failure. Nothing is done. Unfinished work, material all spoiled by handling and wrought into no useful shape, is lying all around—and that is all! Is there any consolation for such a failure as that? Surely none. If the work, the finished work, neat, trim, perfect work, were the end of it all, then surely there is no consolation. The material is wasted; there can be no repair; there is no second chance.

But if behind the work there lies a purpose; and if God may present Himself to me over the ruins of my fallen work as He never could have entered in by its stately and well-built gates, and so the purpose of my life may be attained in all the failure of its form;—then, surely, there is consolation—the consolation upon which the bravest and the most successful of us, O my friends! have to fall back a thousand times—the promise of repair which, though it never can make the breakage of a life seem trivial, may prevent it from seeming fatal; and may make, thank God! a new courage where the old has died, a courage full of faith when the courage of self-reliance has become impossible forever!

Courage! for life is hasting
To endless life away:
The inner life unwasting
Transfigures thy dull clay.

Lost, lost, are all our losses;
Love sets forever free:
The full life heaves and tosses
Like an eternal sea:

One endless, living story,
One poem spread abroad!
And the sum of all our glory
Is the countenance of God!

O God, Who hast loved me with unspeakable love, give me grace to value all things, joys and sorrows, successes and failures, only as means of bringing me nearer Thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. , Amen.

Thursday after the Fourth Sunday.

And as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples saith unto Him: Master, see what manner of stones and what building is here. —Mark, xiii., 1.

A SUPERB utterance of the skill and strength by which man can control the physical world, there they are still to-day, those giant stones! They were crying out to the disciples of man's power over matter, and the disciples were full of wonder at it, but Jesus did not care for it. . . . He prophesied how transitory it was all to prove, and so passed on.

We need to know that that is always true; we who call ourselves the servants of Jesus Christ have no right ever to forget that He *never* is impressed by merely material success or power any more than He was when He saw them in Jerusalem. . . . We see, indeed, that all the spring of marvellous energy, all the vitalizing power which made our civilization has come in connection with the Gospel, and so we are apt to think that what the Gospel set itself to do was to give man this power over the

material world; but when we undertake to search for it, we find that not one word ever fell from Jesus' lips which told that this was what He sought. If material civilization,—that is, the accumulation of wealth, the multiplication of physical comforts, the conquering of force to man's will so that it leaps the ocean almost with a bound and speaks his messages around the globe,—if it could literally stop there and go no farther, leave no impress upon character, it would make no impression upon Christ. He would care nothing for it.

Does it not follow that, if we are Christians, servants of Christ, we too are to care nothing for material success in and for itself? We let it ruin us and oppress us. In our own lives it keeps us struggling and working all our days, from our earliest to our latest years, heaping up money or providing comforts for ourselves; in our brethren's lives around us, we yield to its demands, and render our homage to the man who overpowers us with the bulky imposition of his wealth. If we are really, thoroughly Christians, we could not be such slaves. We must rise in protest, and insist that these are not the things for a spiritual being either to strive for or admire. O my dear friends, we are not wholly Christ's until some such freedom comes to us. . . .

But we have stated only a small part of the truth when we have said that Christ did not care, does not care ever, for merely material triumphs;—Christ does care for the material, but always with an outlook beyond it into the spiritual. . . . Did Jesus care for bustling energy and enterprise? He did. Life! life! was what He was forever calling out for. But a man full of energy, who fought with everything but his passions, and desired all good things but character—that sort of man was all the sadder to the Saviour for the energy that he possessed. Man without spirituality was for Him man without that manhood by which the body and the mind and the impetuous will are made truly human. . . . The time must come when Christian men shall refuse to honor capitalists for mere wealth, or their age for its accumulation of physical comforts. When that time comes, when every material triumph is compelled to show some spiritual gain, some contribution to human character, then how much more life will mean!

He who looks beyond the material to the spiritual which is so much more important—he is the man whom mere material success and magnificence cannot impose upon. Men come to him and say, "Behold, what manner of stones and what building

is here!" "See how rich this man is!" "See how strong this institution is!" "How beautiful this art is!" His answer rings out clear and strong: "So far as they mean spirituality and make spiritual men, I do indeed value them all and thank God for them; yet I value them always with a higher value for the things beyond. I will let any of them go, at any moment, if so I can reach to higher spirituality myself, or make other men better men."

How free that man is! How he can walk the proudest streets and not cringe to the arrogant wealth which crowds them! How calm the judgment with which, looking at them through Christ, he dares to form his own independent judgment of men and things!

How can we reach that freedom? It is only by entering into the higher anxieties of Jesus that one can be freed from the lower anxieties of men. You must care with all your soul that God should be glorified and that men should be saved. If you can do that you are free. And you can do that only by letting God first glorify Himself in you by saving you. Let Christ be your Saviour. Then, tasting His salvation, your one great wish will be that all men may be saved; and, wishing that intensely, you will be free from every wish that

does not harmonize with it. That is St. Paul's great idea when he spoke of "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Nothing so regal as kindness,
  Nothing so mighty as love;—
This be the truth that our blindness
  Scatters with light from above,
Clearing our vision and setting us free
From the prince of this world, to be joined to Thee
In a life of rejoicing liberty.

Blessed Jesus, give me the seeing eye, to look through things material to things spiritual; and the fearless and obedient will, to follow Thee all the days of my life. For Thy mercy's sake. Amen.

Friday after the Fourth Sunday.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.—Ps., li., 17.

MANY things seem to require no law except a law of growth. A seed begins to swell with the latent life, and thenceforth, till the oak is waving its veteran glory against the sky, there is nothing but continuous development, a straight, unbroken line of progress. An egg slowly warms to life, and an uninterrupted unfolding of life goes on, vitality little by little set free for action till the robin sings his perfect song under your window or the perfect eagle sweeps his wings across the sun. . . . And we should have supposed that for the human soul there would be nothing to do but, just like the seed or the egg, to unfold its latent power, and, by the same law of development, to arrive at the most perfect spiritual condition just as certainly as the seed comes to be an oak and the egg comes to be a robin. But when we look into it a little we see that the

seed does not become a perfect tree unless it is a perfect seed, the egg does not become a perfect bird unless it is a perfect egg. If either germ is imperfect, the fruit will be imperfect; and the law of development, the more completely it works, will only multiply imperfection until some hand takes hold and changes the wrong direction to a right one, and so makes development a gracious and a hopeful thing. The law of straight things is just to let them grow; they will grow straight. The law of crooked things must be to break and readjust them; otherwise the more growth, the more crookedness for ever. Growth for the straight things, breakage and readjustment for the crooked things,—those are the two treatments.

The human heart is crooked; it has got bent out of its straight, true line. Henceforth the old principle of growth is not enough. Wrong things will grow wrong; the harder they grow the more wrong they will grow. Given the fact of sin, the most gracious law becomes this new law—the law of breakage and readjustment, the law of broken hearts. . . . The Gospel is not merely a Gospel of supply; it is a Gospel of conversion.

A broken spirit! a broken and a contrite heart! We take it for granted that the means of breakage

must always be some one or other of God's ministers of sorrow. The words fall of themselves into the plaintive undertone with which we speak of grief and all its holy offices. But have we ever asked ourselves why it should be so? God never breaks a human life or spirit just for the sake of breaking it; He always has an object. Sometimes, perhaps oftenest, His object—the stoppage of a life that it may begin anew, and begin better—can be accomplished only through the agency of suffering. The blow has to fall; the fortune that a man leaned against so that he leaned away from God has to break down, the child that the mother clung to so that she would not see her Saviour has to be carried in its coffin outside the house door, before the broken heart is willing to strike straight for God. But are hearts never broken by blessings? Does the sun, with its still and steady mercy, work no chemical changes more gracious and more permanent than the wild winds accomplish? The storm sweeps in some night across your garden, and in the morning, lo! it has wrenched and reshaped the great tree, and snapped a hundred little flowers upon their stems; but the real power there is nothing to the majesty with which, through the still summer days, the sun that woke no sleeping insect

in the grass was drawing into shape the vast arms of forest giants and carving out the beauty of the roses' leaves. I believe that much of the best piety of the world is ripened, not under sorrow but under joy. At any rate, we ought not to talk as if only sorrow brought conversion. There is a grace for happy people too. Blessed is the soul that for very happiness is broken and contrite, turns away from its sins, and goes to Jesus with the spontaneous and unselfish love of gratitude! Anything that makes a man stop and change, and be something different from what he has been, is a compelling grace of God.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." It is not a demand for a mere sentimental condition, for a vague and wretched disappointment with life and its misfortunes, but a demand for you to accept the great law that in every human life there must come a change of direction before it can be set towards happiness. If it has not come to you, it must come before you can be saved. To find out whether it has come or not, and if not, then to seek it with your whole heart and soul until you get it—that is the one thing for you to do.

Blest be Thy dew, and blest Thy frost,
And happy I to be so crost,
And cured by crosses at Thy cost.

The dew doth cheer what is distrest,
The frosts ill weeds nip and molest;
In both Thou workest to the best.

Grant me a broken and contrite heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

By joy and by sorrow break and straighten my will, and bring it more and more into harmony with Thine.

Enter by Thy Holy Spirit into my heart, and cast forth whatever is displeasing to Thee.

While I live, let me work Thy will; when I die, bring me by Thy mercy into life everlasting. Amen.

Saturday after the Fourth Sunday.

That disciple whom Jesus had loved said unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, and did cast himself into the sea.—JOHN, xxi., 7.

HERE are the types of two kinds of natures; here are two men, each showing very strongly and clearly one of the characteristics of humanity. John is the type of insight, Peter is the type of action. . . . No doubt there is a great deal that forces the distinction on us as one of the most fundamental of all the differences that lie between man and man; but it does seem to me that we ought to remember that there is no essential incompatibility between the deepest knowledge and the most energetic action. The Bible talks almost indiscriminately about knowing and serving God as the perfect attainment of the Christian soul, because knowledge and service meet in a harmony which is almost identity in the great personal relationship of love.

We see this very clearly in the relation which

Christ's disciples held to Him. They loved Him—that is the round and total statement of it. But the beautiful thing about it, I think, is to see how in that love, completely personal, met, perfectly harmonious, these two great impulses after knowledge and after action which characterize all human life. I think I see them in His presence;—their faces are glowing with that sublime joy which tells of new knowledge, of deeper insight into the mystery of existence, of visions opening beyond visions into the depths of being and of love. Their hands at the same time are reaching out for work—something to do, some way to utter this knowledge that is filling them, some way to print on the hard matter of this earth the image of their Lord. Dreamers are turning into workers; workers are turning into dreamers. John is opening a Peter-nature; Peter is opening a John-nature. Each, while he keeps his own first character preëminent, is rounding out upon his meagre side into some development of what at first seemed impossible to him. And, by-and-by, when they have been with Him long, they have all gathered into their faces a certain union of insight and activity which it is hard to find in any other group of men. When they go forth at His command, it is hard to say whether it

is as teachers of truth or as workers of wonders that they take gradual possession of the world.

What Jesus did for His disciples in this regard He is always trying to do for us. I think that one of the most beautiful treatments which Christ gives to our souls is that by which He tries, through every kind of discipline, to fill out our deficient Christian life with its lacking element. Often this is the place in which we are to look for the real interpretation of the way in which our Lord is treating us. . . . God sends to you His various dispensations, touches your life with all the manifold touchings of His awful, loving hands. Joy, pain, health, sickness, doubt, care, disappointment,—all of these and all the rest come to you: what shall you think they mean? One thing must certainly be this—that God is trying to complete your life, to fill it out to fulness on its deficient side.

We are to be more complete in heaven than we are here on earth. Will it not be part of the joy of that completeness that every soul shall there live on both sides of its life, that the thinker and the vision-seer shall there taste the full joy of letting his deepest knowledge go forth into glad and vigorous activity, and the hard worker of the earth shall find his work transfigured by seeing how deep were the

unconscious motives which inspired his labor, how great and good was the dear Lord for whom he worked? As we wait for that completeness, if we always keep it in our sight and hope for it, it will not be hard for us to be tolerant or appreciative of one another. The man of action may rejoice that the man of thought is deepening life; the man of thought may thank God that the man of action is widening life. John and Peter may go hand in hand and do a work that neither by himself could do.

And what shall each of us do for himself? Shall not these Laws of Life come out of all that we have said?

(1) Let there be no insight without its work; let me count no knowledge of God really won till it has helped me to do something for Him or His children.

(2) Let there be no work without its insight; let me take satisfaction in no active labor, however brilliant, however helpful it may seem to men, unless there come out of it some deeper insight of God, and so some chance to love Him better and be more wholly His.

So shall the great words of Hosea the Prophet be fulfilled anew in our happy, growing lives: "Then

shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

The thought without the act is vain
As seed that yields no harvest grain;
The act without the thought is dead
As cinders whence the flame is fled.

Think well, that when thy thought is grown
Some noble action shall be sown:
Act well, that when thine act is o'er
Bright thoughts may warm thy heart once more.

O Blessed Saviour, grant that in contemplation I may sit at Thy feet; and in action that I may follow in Thy blessed footsteps which went about doing good. Amen.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

And it was now dark, and Jesus was not yet come to them.—JOHN, vi., 17.

MAN'S darkness and Christ's presence belong together. Darkness—of pain, of mystery, of bewilderment with regard to the true way of action,—darkness in any sense demands Christ's presence as the completing element, is strange, unhappy, bad without Him, becomes natural, serene, healthy, hopeful, when it has received Him as its interpretation and illumination. That is our truth.

It is what He said Himself when He declared that it was not the righteous, but the sinners whose need had called Him, and when He drew the imperishable picture of the lost sheep and the longing Shepherd seeking for it in the wilderness. So the men in the boat on the lake had still something to do with Jesus. He was theirs; they were His. Their darkness had in it the possibility of His enlightenment. However He did it,—whether, as He ultimately chose to do it, by coming to them

walking on the water or in any other way,—the end must be that He would come, for they were His and He was theirs. Suppose that they had known this, how different the gathering darkness would have been to them! How the darknesses of life are altered when a man thoroughly knows, as he approaches one of them, that in it, because of its peculiar nature, Christ will be able to make a revelation of Himself peculiar and peculiarly precious, one which only in such peculiar darkness could be possible. New truths of spiritual life come out like stars. New depths which the glare of prosperity had simply made to shine and dazzle, now open with all their distinguished and discriminated richness. And lo! creation widens in the view of the man to whom Christ has come not merely in the light, but in the dark.

You say, "Yes; but this man of whom you are talking is the man in the dark to whom Christ has come. Speak about the men in the dark to whom Jesus has not come. We are such men. The darkness is very real to us,—darkness of disappointment darkness of sin, darkness of practical bewilderment! It is mere mockery for us to hear of men to whom in their darkness Christ has come. He does not come to us. We have waited and waited, and He does not come,—what can you say to *us?*"

Two things only. The first is that expectancy, the looking for something, for some One who, I know, *is*, and who, I am sure, *must come* to me at last—that is a noble state. Indeed, one learns to think that expectation and attainment are not separated by any such broad lines as we used to imagine; they meet and mingle at their edges. While the disciples peered into the dark for Jesus, and said, through the roaring of the storm to one another, "Oh, if He were only here!" was not that wish for Him a sort of presence of Him in their boat? And so the man in doubt who waits for certainty, the man in weakness who cries out for God's strength, the man in sin who prays for holiness, however the things he prays for may seem to delay their coming, has, in the very struggle—the cry, the prayer, the hope—the spirit and anticipated power of the thing he waits for.

And the other thing—which perhaps is not another, but only the same thing in another form—is this: that Christ was with the disciples, not merely subjectively in their imaginations, but really He was with them all the time. "Jesus was not come to them," the story says; but we must know more than we know now, more than we can know, of the nature of that mysterious Figure which by-

and-by grew out of the darkness and came across the water to their boat, before we can say what the real, objective meaning of His coming was. He had been with them all the time. His love, His watchfulness, had never left them. When He came to them, it was to their sight, their consciousness, their comfort, that He came.

Do you see what this means? Are you in darkness? Do you hear other men in their boats, through the darkness, welcoming Christ? Do you say, "Why does He not come to me?" Never cease to cry out for Him until your eyes have seen Him, till your hands have touched Him; but meanwhile, till then, be sure that, seen or unseen, just because He is Christ, He *must be* with you. Work as if, though you could not see Him, you knew that He saw you. Be faithful to the Christ who shall some day make Himself known to you. Do what, if He were in your life, He would want you to do; and then, when at last the curtain is drawn back, and you see Him who has been with you unseen all the time, His "Well done, good and faithful servant!" shall cover all the long days of patient waiting, as well as the bright day of eager and satisfied sight.

May God grant it for us all who have to wait!

Oh, the waiting time, my brothers,
Is the hardest time of all!
But at last we learn the lesson
That God knoweth what is best;
And with wisdom cometh patience,
And with patience cometh rest.
Yea, a golden thread is shining
Through the tangled woof of fate
And our hearts shall thank Him meekly
That He taught us how to wait.

Lord, who art gracious to them that wait upon Thee, be our arm of strength in every time.

Make us to wait patiently Thy time, knowing that all times are in Thy hand.

Perfect Thy work in us, and let our eyes behold Thy salvation.

Thine is the blessing and glory, and thanksgiving, and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

Monday after the Fifth Sunday.

Then said Jesus unto them, My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.—JOHN, vii., 6.

CHRIST'S brethren were urging Him to go up to Jerusalem and show Himself. . . . Jesus answers them: No, you can go, but I must not; I have a work to do which binds me with responsibilities. You, in your lower, less burdened, less responsible, less inspired life are more free than I; my time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.

It must have been a sad, but not a strange experience to Him. It was simply the point where the Higher Nature, with the greater work, submitted Itself to constraints and necessities from which the lower natures, with their smaller tasks, were free. . . . We can think of our lives as set in almost anywhere, and made by the ages and the places into which they fell into any one of a hundred things; but when He said, "Lo! I come to do Thy

will, O Lord," that consecration bound Him to the definite career which the Incarnation introduced. For Him the manger at Bethlehem, the road down into Egypt, the home at Nazareth, the baptism at Jordan, were all waiting. The prophecies, the whole prophetic history which had made ready for His coming bound Him with golden chains. His consciousness developed and His will made its choice; still there was only one thing that He must choose to be and do,—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" How the sublime compulsion which those words express sounds in sharp contrast with that claim of voluntariness which, as it makes the danger, also makes the glory of the ordinary boy beginning life! The thing that He must do held Him fast from the very first. "For this cause was I born, and for this cause came I into the world"; so He was always saying, alike when He went to John to be baptized, and when He stood before Pilate to be condemned.

When I understand this, when I see how truly He was thus constrained because He was Divine, then I seem to come into the presence of a thought which ought always to be full of the profoundest solemnity and comfort. That thought is the necessary element of compulsion in the life of God. We rest

upon Him not alone in the possibilities but also in the impossibilities of His life,—whatever comes, whatever men may choose to do or be, He can never be anything but just and good and holy. All our unanswered prayers, all our wild wishes that are not fulfilled, all the delays of consolation and relief,—they all cease to be utterly bewildering and exasperating when we know and hourly remember that every one of them goes up into the presence of a God who is as full of the compulsions of wisdom and holiness as He is of the impulses of love. . . . By-and-by we come to know, through many experiences which almost broke our hearts as we received them, but which we now thank God for in our most grateful prayers, that a million disappointments of our wishes are a cheap price enough to pay for the conviction rooted and grounded immovably at the very bottom of our souls that God *must* do the right, that however He may love a child of His, He cannot for that child do anything that is wrong, or leave anything that is right undone.

All this was at once manifested and deepened in the Incarnation. The Bible never hesitates to speak of the surrender of freedom which the Incarnation of Christ involved as part of the true sacrifice which He made for us. . . . And so those

chains which the will of Christ to save us bound around the freedom of His life, become perpetual witnesses not only of His love but also of our sin. Terrible indeed must be the wickedness of a world into which its Maker and Master cannot come except through the door of deprivation and contempt!

And yet He came! And so the sacrifices which He made are signals also of His love. And they are witnesses also of this, which all men must learn who shall at any time undertake to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and do something for the salvation of their brethren—that every attainment of usefulness, of real, saving power, can come only by the restriction and sacrifice of freedom. He who will in any degree become a saviour must see other men go up to the feast while he lingers behind; must wait until his hour comes; must be, among the men that he would save, "as one that serveth"; must gird himself and wash the feet of those whose souls he wants to save. Thank God the lesson has been an easy one for multitudes of men and women to learn since it was written in the Face of Christ! Thousands have leaped, as to the gospel for which their lives were thirsty, to the great truth which they read there—that the exaltation of nature, while it

means freedom of soul, means restraint of action; and so they have taken up the bounded and limited life which lay before them, as the symbol and witness that they had entered by the new birth into the full liberty of Christ.

So, let him wait the instant men call years;
Meantime hold hard by truth, and his great soul
Do out the duty.

And Duty opens wide the door
By which Love enters free,
The Love whose rule is largest life
And purest liberty.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who, being Infinite, didst for our sake deign to encompass Thyself with limitations; curb our hearts, wills, imaginations, desires; that law and instruction may be our ornament of grace and chains of dignity, and that Thy service may be our perfect freedom. Amen.

Tuesday after the Fifth Sunday.

My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.—JOHN vii., 6.

OUR text speaks not merely of the constraint of the higher nature, but also of the freedom of the lower. Where Christ was bound, His disciples, as living lower lives and bearing lower responsibilities than His, were free. . . . We can consider them, we can consider ourselves, remember, in two different ways. In one view, we are workers with Christ, we are called upon to share His nature, and so we enter into all the restraints of freedom which belong to Him. In the other view, we are beings for whom He is working; He takes the responsibility off of our shoulders; we have but to let Him do for us that which He is all ability and willingness to do.

If we for one moment separate, then, the second thought, the thought of the freedom from care which belongs to the lower life, led and watched over by the Higher, see how rich it is! The Lord

said to His disciples, "Go up to the feast now; I am not ready yet." Enough for you, He seems to say, that I keep in my anxious heart the plan of the great work which must be done; enough that I accept its constraints and bow to its necessities. You have only to go upon your way and do your duties as they come to you, and I will see that they are all wrought into the great system, and make their little part of my complete success.

Do you not see the parable? There is one great and welcome view of life in which we have a right to think that God commands us just to go on and do our clear duties, and He will see that they work out completely ultimately in the great design. . . . When the whole great design grows dim before us, when we find it hard to trace any great purpose running through this snarl of life, when doubt of the great consummation makes us weak, oh, how strength comes to us from the conviction of the freedom of the lower nature! Then, just to go on and do our duties one by one, even without knowing where they are leading us; to make to-day's hard march, to fight to-day's hard battle, and leave the great campaign where it belongs, in the wise Captain's hands,—*there* is the only comfort, the only light, which oftentimes seems left to us; and

when we take it in profound humility, behold! it is enough. Doing the duty that we see, living by the truth we know, His promise is fulfilled to us,—we do not walk in darkness, but we have the light of life.

It seems to me that we can have no better picture of the life that we are called upon to live than in the thought of Christ's disciples after they had gone up to Jerusalem, and while they were waiting there for Christ to come. They were there because He had sent them, and they knew that, by-and-by, when He arrived, they would understand what it all meant, why this great Feast of Tabernacles should be held, and why they should take part in it, and what new, better thing was to grow out of it. Meanwhile they did their part in the great ceremony like the Jews, waiting for Christ. And so we often seem to have come where we are, into the tasks which we have to do, into the truths which we believe, sent there by Christ; and we are waiting for Christ to come up to the feast and put His full life into what yet seems to be only half-filled, dimly filled with Him. Our souls, our hearts, cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus! Come, and make all truth clear; come, and make all duty rich and easy with Thy love!"

What shall we do until He comes? Not blame Him or complain of His slowness, know always that His higher nature must have constraints and delays which ours cannot understand, rejoice that even now we may have the light that comes of knowing that we are where He has sent us, and then work and believe,—work as courageously and cheerfully as possible, believe with all the faith we can,—but do both with our eyes always fixed upon the gate by which, when His time shall be ready, He shall enter into His temple and complete our life.

. . . For I have learned by knocking at Heaven's gate
The meaning of one golden word that shines above it, "Wait!"
For with the Master whom to serve is not to ride or run,
But only to abide His will, "Well waited is well done."

Grant to me, O Blessed Lord Jesus, patience in waiting for Thee, and diligence in working for Thee; and that in doing both my heart may be filled with such loving trust in Thee that the waiting shall not seem long, nor the work hard; so that both shall be done to Thy glory. Amen.

Wednesday after the Fifth Sunday.

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.—MARK, x., 33.

EVERY yearly Passover Jesus went up to the national temple, and while He was there He taught some of His profoundest teachings and did many of His most significant and mightiest works. . . . The going to Jerusalem becomes a habit, and in that habit the labor of His life finds its inspiration. The life that has been consecrated in the city of God, and then educated in the city of God, now works in the city of God. It labors in Jerusalem, and its labors become but the utterance of the nature and will of the King in whose kingly city they are done. Not now in one single act, but in a continuous resort thither, which represents the continual need and allegiance of all His life, Jesus goes to Jerusalem that His work may be filled with the meaning and the glory of the Divine Light whose symbolical earthly dwelling-place was there. He talks with Nicodemus, and cures the cripple, and

forgives the wretched woman, and raises Lazarus, in or close by the city of God, that the wisdom, the health, the forgiveness, the new life, may be seen and declared to be the gifts of His Father, who is King of all.

Now, is not the perpetual meaning of these visits clear? Do we not see the way in which they are to be repeated in all our life? Beyond our first conception of ourselves as God's children,—beyond our education under Him, so that our ideas shall take His color,—something more is needed. Our daily work, the constant occupation of our life, needs to be done in His presence, and to be shone through and through by Him. Often it is the hardest part of our religion. It is comparatively easy to keep hidden away in the most sacred and secret chamber of our soul the general consecration of our life to God, easy, comparatively, to shape our thought after what we know of Him, but our work—these things which we have to do day after day for our living, these things which we have to do as merchants, scholars, lawyers, clerks, school teachers, housekeepers, mechanics,—to do all these in Jerusalem, under God's kingship, as His servants, so that His light shall shine through them, and men shall see not us or our act alone, but Him,—that is the per-

petual hardness of the Christian life. Unselfishness and elevation—those are the qualities that make the transparent beauty of an act done in Jerusalem, done in the sight and love and loyalty of God. Even our most gracious actions, even our help of our fellow-men, done out of Jerusalem, done outside of a presently apprehended love of God, are clouded with some sort of selfishness and sordidness. They become perfectly clear in us only as they were perfectly clear in Christ, by being done, every one of them, in the immediate presence of God, out of desire to serve Him, and to show Him, and to make His will succeed. I am sure that if we contemplate them carefully, we shall see that this is the real essence of the difference between Christ's Christian life and ours. Our life is lived in a general consecration to God, but with Him every act is conscious of God and filled with Him. So selfishness and sordidness are utterly absent in His life, but they are always showing themselves in ours.

It is good to go for work to the Holy City to which you have already gone for consecration. It is good to bring every special act, to do every special duty, within the light of that motive to which your life as a whole is given. Fill your cheapest action with the enthusiasm of your best

desires and hopes, let your most commonplace work be part of the same consecrated life with your bravest heroism, as the drummer-boy is part of the same army with the general. That is the true secret of noble life, and that is the lesson of Christ's working visits to Jerusalem.

> And everywhere, here and always,
> If we would but open our eyes,
> We should find through these beaten footpaths
> Our way into Paradise.
>
> Dull earth would be dull no longer,
> The clod would sparkle—a gem;
> And our hands, at their commonest labor,
> Would be building Jerusalem.

Almighty and merciful God, into whose gracious Presence we ascend, not by the frailty of the flesh, but by the activity of the soul: make us ever, by Thy inspiration, to seek after the courts of the heavenly City, and, by Thy mercy, confidently to enter them, both here and hereafter. Amen.

Thursday after the Fifth Sunday.

For Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with His disciples.—JOHN, xviii., 2.

THESE words occur in the story of the night before the Crucifixion. Jesus had eaten the passover supper with His disciples, and after it was over He went out with them, and having crossed the brook Kedron, He entered the Garden of Gethsemane. It was old, familiar ground to Him. Many an experience was already associated with that bit of grass and those old olive trees. He had thought and prayed and suffered there already, and when He saw a new experience approaching, and that the greatest of experiences, the very crisis of His earthly life, His steps turned back to the old haunt. It was as if He rested and steadied Himself upon all His previous experience as He undertook His final work of suffering and death.

It is good for us to know this; it is good for Christians to understand that it is by the life as well

as the death of Jesus that their souls are saved. The power of the Cross was that same power which had been in all the life which led up to the Cross. All through that life of the God-man, God had been giving Himself to man in love; man had been giving himself to God in obedience. So we want to find in every life the true relation between its quiet, uneventful periods and the critical moments which here and there break through its calmness. It is possible so to live that the great moments of your life shall not be wild convulsing meteors or tempests. Men have learned that tempests and meteors are but the culminating points of processes that are at work upon the calmest days. It is while you are doing a thousand little duties in the fear of God that you are slowly growing into familiarity with Him. It is while you are patiently toiling at the little tasks of life that the meaning and shape of the great whole of life dawns upon you. It is while you are resisting little temptations that you are growing strong. Character, by the very necessities of its nature, cannot be made except by steady, long-continued process, by pressure after pressure and blow after blow.

Such a truth seems to put dignity into the uneventful moments and years of life. It redeems

the monotony of living. You say: "I am doing nothing, nothing but running this weary round, nothing but finishing one day only to begin another. How dull and dreary life is!" Oh! it is not dull, and it need not be dreary, if it is making you know God, and know yourself, and grow good. Sometime the even level will be broken up; sometime the crisis will arrive. Your life will not always be uneventful. Perhaps the tempest and the battle are to come to-morrow; perhaps they are yet long years away. What does it matter? They are sure to come;—at least the great event that comes in every life will come to you—that event which we call dying. No life is so vulgar and mean but that it arrives, sooner or later, at the dignity of death. The crisis will come, but the power of the crisis is here and now, in these days which you are ready to call dull and insignificant. Oh, if you could see how they are all burdened with criticalness!

The ship is out on mid-ocean; and it is midnight, and the storm is wild. The winds are savage, and the sea is terrible. We say the ship is struggling for her life. But, tell me, where was the real struggle of that vessel? Was it not long ago upon the hillside where her timbers grew, and in the shipyard

where her nails were driven? *Then* it was decided whether she was to go to the bottom, or come safely to her port. So, as I look forward, I can see you, on some day in the years to come, wrestling with the great temptation or trembling like a reed under the great sorrow of your life, a temptation or a sorrow of which you have, as yet, no conception. That crisis may be years away. But the real struggle is not *then*, but *now*—here, on this quiet day and in these quiet weeks. *Now* it is being decided whether, in the day of your supreme sorrow or temptation, you shall miserably fail or gloriously conquer.

Christ is the Son of God, the Interpreter of life, the Giver of character; if you are His, His strength is entering into you; no moment of your life is insignificant. Each least act opens some new corner of your nature and appropriates Him a little more fully; and all that He is doing for you now shall be made known at last. To-morrow or next year, or years hence, or an eternity away, when the test comes, when the blow falls, you shall be more than conqueror through Him who is becoming your Christ now. Therefore take courage, and every day give yourself to Him that He may give Himself to you.

We stride the river daily at its spring,
Nor, in our childish thoughtlessness, foresee
What myriad vassal streams shall tribute bring,
How like an equal it shall greet the sea.

O small beginnings, ye are great and strong,
Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain;
Ye build the future fair, ye conquer wrong,
Ye earn the crown, and wear it not in vain.

O God, Who hast made us in Thine own Image and Likeness, and hast placed that before us perfectly in the life of Thy dear Son; give us strength and determination to act habitually as in Thy sight, according to Thy will: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday after the Fifth Sunday.

For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.—Heb., ii., 10.

It is not every sort of suffering that trains the souls of men. Simple suffering, taken by itself, has never any such educating power; it gets it only by the strength of some end or purpose that is discovered in it. The man who has suffered much, and yet who knows nothing of suffering but its pain, is hard and not soft; is selfish, querulous, ungrateful. The blows have beaten his outer nature into a crust to keep the inner life more than ever a prisoner, instead of breaking the outer life to let the inner life forth.

What, then, must we put into suffering to make it a true means of education? Two things: First, hearty and cordial submission to another's will. Look at the child who patiently submits because his father says not, "You must," but "It is well you should." Look at the men and women everywhere

who have no question after they have found out what God's will is, who simply go and do it, in whatever pain, because they know it must be right and best that His will should be done. In all such cases, where suffering comes out of willing submission to a superior and trusted will, it brings the sufferer into sympathy with the purpose of that will, it demands spiritual enterprise and faith, and so it calls out the better life and educates the soul.

There is another thing which you must add to suffering to make it a means of perfection. It must be the suffering not merely of faith, but of love. No man grows the best by what he suffers only for himself. There is not half as much spiritual culture in the pain of fever that tosses on the sick bed, submissive as it may be to God, as in the pain of sleeplessness and anxiety that watches by its side and not merely submits to God, but suffers for love of a fellow man. All the highest and most educating suffering of the world has been vicarious. It has been the suffering which the sufferer was in no way bound to bear, save as Jesus was bound to die for our sins, "for the great love wherewith He loved us."

Put both of these elements in, and then you have the perfect and the perfecting suffering. This is

what makes sick-rooms sweet and martyrdoms glorious. The life is not hardened and crusted by the hammer of agony, but broken for the escape of its better and more spiritual portion by the buoyant and elastic blows.

In all the sufferings of Jesus both these elements supremely met. You know how solicitious He was everywhere to tell the world that He is no volunteer, unauthorized Redeemer, that He is doing what He does in submission to a Great Eternal Will. This is the tone of everything,—"Not Mine, but the Father's that sent Me." One meaning of this surely is that Christ, by this continual submission of His will to Deity, was helping forth the Deity in His own nature to full consciousness and power. . . . Even men have felt, when they suffered supremely in submission to God, that their submissive souls sprang into freer sympathy with God and understanding of His plans; what, then, must it have been for Him who was God, self-clouded in humanity for awhile, when, submissive to the Godhood in His suffering, the cloud broke from Him, and the long exile was finished, and the Divinity of the Son swept through the encumbrance of the human life and laid itself close to the Divinity of the Father!

The other perfecting element of suffering is also plentiful in the suffering of Christ,—He suffered for love to others, not for Himself. "To seek and save that which was lost," "To call the sinners to repentance," "Lifted up to draw all men unto Him," "Lifted up that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," —take the love for men out of the life of Jesus, and it is as if you had taken the sun out of the sunlight. . . . Does it seem strange to say that it was this suffering for His brethren which softened and unfolded the human life of the Redeemer, that the Divine nature might become more manifest and active? It is but the self-same law which decrees that only when men suffer for other people do they do their best, and bring forth into their own consciousness and into the sight of other men the highest nature that is in them.

It pleased Him to make the Captain of our salvation "perfect through suffering." This, which we have been trying to define, we hold to be one meaning of this wonderful phrase. I do not say that there may not be other meanings; but this, at least, is there—that the Divine Jesus ripened and developed into more perfect knowledge and use of His Divinity. If we cannot without some sense of vio-

lence transfer the scene at the Last Supper and the scene by the lake of Tiberias to the earliest years of Christ, must not the reason be that Christ was made perfect for them only through the sufferings that came so abundantly to Him in His submission to His Father, and His love for His brethren ?

It is idle to talk of suffering as if it were the privilege of a few select lives only. Suffering and its culture, like joy and its culture, are within the lot of every man. He lives unworthily whose nature never clashes against the lower natures, and suffers pain. But mere pain is not education, does not bring growth. It is the suffering of willing submission to God and of self-sacrificing love for fellowmen that softens and spiritualizes and blesses us. In all such suffering let us rejoice. We shall not need to seek, opportunities enough for it will meet us everywhere. And may God help us everywhere to find the treasures they contain!

We take with solemn thankfulness
Our burden up, nor ask it less,
And count it joy that even we
May suffer, serve, or wait for Thee,
Whose will is done.

O my God, by whose loving Providence sorrows, difficulties, trials, dangers, become means of grace, lessons of patience, channels of hope, grant me good will to use and not abuse these my privileges; and of Thy great goodness keep me alive in Thee through this dying life, that out of death Thou mayest raise me up to immortality: For His sake who is the Life, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday after the Fifth Sunday.

And Jesus entered into Jerusalem.—MARK, xi., 11.

THERE remains yet one more entrance of Jesus into the Holy City, the most solemn of them all. It was His last. He never came into those streets again. And now He came to be condemned and die. His sacrifice for man and the culmination of His sufferings were before Him,—Love, self-devoting Love and pain. And for both of these He comes up to Jerusalem. "It must not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." He had served His brother-men everywhere, but when His supreme service of them comes it must be in God's city. He had suffered everywhere, but when His supreme suffering comes, that, too, must be where His Father's presence is most manifestly declared, in the City of God. It is the acceptance of the claims of men, and the need of suffering as included in, and impressed upon Him by, the will of God,—it is this that is signified by His last visit to Jerusalem.

And so this visit, like the rest, comes home to us. The impulse to help men, to save men if we can, is universal. Very feebly in most souls, but very strongly in some, and with some kind of fluttering in all, the wish to help and save our brethren is in our hearts. From the mere impulse of easy good nature it ranges up to the passion of the eager philanthropist. . . . There is the help which men give to brother men, the sacrifice which men make for brother men, purely for themselves; and there are the help and sacrifice which are given and done in the love and name of God. The depth and tenderness and constancy of men's relations to each other is completed when men know one another as the children of God, and live for them and, if need be, die for them, as brethren in Him,—only then. The deepest natural affections need to be taken into the City of God before they come to their best. They must be consecrated by religion. The mother's love for the child, the child's duty to the mother, the friend's friendship for the friend, the citizen's devotion to his country, the man's enthusiasm for humanity,—they all grow hard and rigid unless they are kept bathed in the soul's love of God. When you have any task to do, any sacrifice to make for your fellow-men, do not

try to do it till you have first put yourself and him where you both belong—into the family of God. In the rich atmosphere of divine consecration, the cross on which you give yourself for fellow-men shall grow light as your Saviour's did, and it shall be very easy to lift it, very easy to be lifted on it. When you are called upon to share any part of the Saviour's great work of saving the world, go where He went to do it—into Jerusalem, the City of God.

And this is true of the other purpose which brought Jesus there on His last visit. He had pain to suffer, and He came up to Jerusalem to bear it. Pain borne outside of the presence of God, not as His gift, not with His sympathy, is hardening. Pain borne in His love and with His help is the soul's salvation. How great the difference is when that line is crossed! A man is suffering one day all by himself, and he is growing more bitter and hard all the time; hard, stern, selfish, that is what his suffering makes him. The next day it has come into his heart, and gone all through his nature, that he is God's child, and that his suffering has come to him not outside his Father's love. Behold the difference! Every best part of him now feeds upon his pain, and "life is perfected by death." Oh! there is nothing in the world so sad as to see men

and women suffering without God, nothing so noble as have been the sights which the world has seen of men suffering where Christ suffered—in obedience to the will and in the comfort of the love of God. If God calls upon you to suffer, go where your Saviour went for His sufferings, into the Holy City where God is most manifest ; and so, and *there*, your suffering shall be to you what His suffering was to Him—the crown, the completion, the success of His life.

Some men used to believe that the city of Jerusalem was literally the centre of the earth ; they drew their maps with all the rest of the world spread in a circle round that point. Have we not seen what is the spiritual truth which such ideas contained ? The true life must always be going up to the City of God. It must go there for its first total consecration. It must go there for its education. It must go there for its work. It must go there to catch sight of the promised victory. And at last it must go there for its final sacrifice and pain, which bring the end and the victory. Under every variety of circumstance we go up to Him, and the gates of God are always open to us. He takes us in our sorrow and our joy, in our triumph or our shame, and every mood and time of life come to their best only as they enter into Him.

I am not glad till I have known
Life that can lift me from my own;
A loftier level must be won,
A mightier strength to lean upon.

And heaven draws near as I ascend;
The breeze invites, the stars befriend;
All things are beckoning towards the Best:
I climb to Thee, my God, for rest!

O God, in the time of suffering and sorrow give us grace to come to Thee for help; that being strengthened by Thy Spirit, we may be enabled to rise above our pains, and abide in the peace of Thy love and pardon: Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sixth Sunday in Lent.

And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?—MATT., xxi., 10.

IF we leave out His enemies, those who concluded that Christ was merely an impostor or a wild enthusiast, it will be easy to distinguish three classes in that crowd of Jerusalem, giving three different answers to the question that was tossed from tongue to tongue, "Who is He?"

"Do you not know?" cries one. "It is the great wonder-worker out of Galilee." And then with fluent tongue and glowing face he hurries on to tell of all the miracles that he has seen,—of how the blind man down at Jericho received his sight, of how the lunatic at Gadara was cured, of how the dead man here at Bethany came back to life;—all that the Lord had done, all His mighty works were told. "Let us follow Him, and see what more strange works He will do." Another man speaks not to the crowd, but to some little group of

thoughtful-looking people who he knows will sympathize with him. "Who is this?" they say; and he replies, "The Truth-teacher"; and he goes on to tell, not of the miracles, but of some strange, profound words that the Lord once spoke. "Let us follow Him; He is going to the temple; perhaps we shall hear something more." Another group would answer the question only to their own hearts, or at least only to some one most trusted friend. For them the wonder of His miracles, even the richness of His truth, were nothing to the subtle influence of love with which He had entered in and turned them into something like Himself, given them His courage and unselfishness and peacefulness and patience and joy. Their answer was, "The Heart-changer, the Maker of new life in men. Let us follow Him that we may be near Him; to be near Him is to really live."

The Wonder-worker, the Truth-teller, the Heart-changer!—I know full well which it was that the Saviour Himself most longed to be to men. "The works that I do, they bear witness of Me," He declared; "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," He cried; but what a deep pathos came into His voice when He pleaded, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life!" He loved to do His

work; He loved to speak His truth; but when a heart opened itself to Him and let Him be its Life, then His joy was full; that was what He had come for, that was His Father's work.

Dear friends, as our souls stand waiting for their Deliverer, what is He whom we expect? As we hear the sound of His coming in all this movement of Christian life about us, Who is He that comes? A Wonder-worker to bring us forgiveness? A Truth-teacher to open Heaven? Yes; but He is more than that if we will let Him be. He must be more than that if He is really to save us. He comes with Love which, when He puts it into us, is Life. He comes with His eternal heart of pity which, when He gives it to us, becomes our new heart of trust. He brings us not only His Power, not only His Wisdom, He brings us Himself, and He says: "He that believeth in Me, though He were dead yet shall he live."

On this Palm Sunday, I wish that some of us could hear the footsteps of the coming Christ. Slowly, quietly, He is approaching. Now hidden and now shown by the winding road, He is pressing more and more closely on us. Around us men are questioning about Him; they are asking, "Who is He?" Let us have our answer at least ready:

He is my Saviour. To know Him has been a new life to me. It has been salvation. Henceforth not I live, but He liveth in me; and where He leads me I will go, what He makes me I will be, now and forever.

Light above light and Bliss above bliss,
Whom words cannot utter, lo! Who is This?
As a king with many crowns He stands,
And our names are graven on His hands;
As a Priest, with God-uplifted eyes,
He offers for us His sacrifice;
As the Lamb of God for sinners slain,
That we too may live He lives again.

Who art Thou, O Lord Jesus Christ? Thou didst become Man; as the First-born of every creature I worship Thee.

Thou art the Word, God and with God; as the Divine Word I worship Thee.

Thou art the Way by which alone man cometh to the Father; a wayfarer liable to error and beseeching safeguard, I worship Thee.

Thou art the Truth, in Whom mercy and truth are met together; in the paths of Thy mercy and Thy truth I worship Thee.

Thou art the Life, who hadst power to lay down Thy life for us and take it again; as the Life of life I worship Thee.

O Thou Who hearest prayer, and to Whom all flesh shall come, grant me grace to know and worship Thee, now and forever. Amen.

Monday in Holy Week.

And the multitudes that went before and that followed cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.—Matt., xxi., 9.

It was Christ's day of triumph. He whom the people had so often turned away from, was now surrounded by them; their shouts were ringing in His ears, and He was riding over the branches and the clothes with which they had strewn His path. He had been humiliated and restrained. No recognition of the kingliness that was in Him had broken the long, heavy months of contempt and persecution. Only a few disciples and a little company of women had caught sight of what He really was. But now at last the darkness had broken into light, the silence had opened into utterance. He knew that it belonged to Him; with calm, serene authority He took it for His own. Each cry of "Hosanna" that rose about Him met in His consciousness the certain knowledge that He was indeed a King. . . .

An hour later Christ, with his shouting escort, entered into Jerusalem, and "He went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." The traders of the temple fled more easily because it was the people's Hero of the moment who appeared with the whip in His hand, and indignation burning in His face. So Jesus used His triumph, His greatness, to purify the desecrated temple. There was the consecration of unselfishness. Not for Himself was He glad to be acknowledged, but because He could so reclaim the insulted dignity of God.

Now put that beside the ordinary uses which men make of power. Only think what it would be if every man to whom came privilege or exaltation turned it to that employment. How the privilege itself would be sanctified, and how the desecrated places of our life would be made holy, if every man in whom men saw genius, before whose feet they scattered their applause, whom they escorted with their shouts wherever he chose to go, should always choose to go straight to some temple which belonged to God, but which men were profaning with their wickedness, and with the fire of his genius sweep it

clean; if every man who towered above men with his colossal wealth used that almost despotic influence which wealth gives to glorify integrity and to teach charity; if every man in high office consecrated his power to defy and stigmatize corruption; if every popular man tried to make men follow him to better lives; if every woman powerful in social life used her position to make Society more pure; if every brilliant scholar tried to make literature more sincere and full of faith! This is the only way in which powers become embalmed for ever. If Jesus had done nothing with His triumph, it would have died away with the withering of the palm branches and the fading out of the hosannas in the April air. But now the sound of the lashes is ringing still, and the world is purer for them. It is a terrible temptation to let power go unused. But an unused power is lost. O prosperous, powerful, privileged people! in all your different ways be like the Lord, and seal and consecrate your privilege by using it for some glory of God.

I must not seem to speak only to the few who are specially great and triumphant. The humblest and the poorest among you may hear and remember that, whenever any triumph comes to you, however small it be, any prosperity or any power, it is not

wholly yours till you have used it; and remember Christ showed you the true use of it, which is to glorify God, to stand up for righteousness in some little spot, to make the world more pure.

When one sees the effect of prosperity on men, it often seems as strange that God, who cares only for men's best spiritual good, should allow His children to prosper as that He should let them be crushed with misfortune. For prosperity is always doing for men just the opposite of what it did for Jesus, making them cowards and unfitting them for pain. "In all time of our prosperity," we may well pray, "Good Lord, deliver us." Deliver us not only from its mischiefs, but set us free for its true use. Make it do for us what it did for Thee. Give us the grace to grow by every privilege more strong for God's glory and honor, more pitiful of brother men, and more ready for the change when the day darkens and panic comes where peace is now.

We Christians are continually dwelling upon the sufferings of Jesus, and it is good that we should do so. He was preëminently and peculiarly the Saviour by suffering. It is as the Man of Sorrows, the Man acquainted with grief, that He has always made His great appeal to the heart of man. But to-day we have been led to look upon the other side, and think

how exalted and how great He was. Behold! when we do that, we do not, as we might well fear to do, lose sight and hold of that helpfulness and strength in Christ which has been most associated with, most revealed to us through, His humiliation. As He is exalted He only shows to us in new lights His pity and faithfulness. Here is great reassurance for the Christian. Here is a truth which many Christians need. It sometimes seems as if the loftier views of Christ's nature, those which most crowned Him with the glory of the Godhead, might — perhaps must—separate His life from ours. Jesus, the brother man, the sharer in my wants and infirmities, I can take hold of *Him*. He does pity me. But Christ, the Son of God, One with the Father, He is too far away. Can He pity a poor, insignificant creature like me? Is he anxious for and busy with the destinies of earth? Have we not lost Him from the earth when we have set Him in the heavens?

But never be afraid of that! The souls that have set Christ highest have always found Him dearest. The more you understand how far He is above you, the more you will know how near He is to you. Exalt your Saviour then! Crown Him with many crowns. Magnify the depth of that nature, the mystery of that work by which you are redeemed.

You will not lose your Saviour so; rather He shall come as He came on that day of His exaltation to the heart and conscience of Jerusalem, with new love and power to your heart and conscience. Whether triumphing or suffering, whether on Olivet or Calvary, He is always the same Christ; always full of love, and always strong in judgment. Let us open our gates to Him to-day. Come in, O Christ, and judge us! Come, and we will cast out,—nay, come and cast out for us every sin that hinders Thee! Come, purge our souls by Thy presence as Thou didst of old purge the temple! Come, be our King for ever! "Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord."

In Thee all fulness dwelleth,
All grace and power divine;
The glory that excelleth,
O Son of God, is Thine:
We worship Thee, we praise Thee,
To Thee alone we sing;
We praise Thee and confess Thee
Our glorious Lord and King!

I beseech Thee, Lord Jesus, to enter the temple of my heart, and to purge out and drive far away from me whatever Thou shalt see there polluted or profane. Preserve me from evil and strengthen me in all goodness, that I may enter with Thee into the everlasting habitations of the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.

Tuesday in Holy Week.

The sun was darkened.—LUKE, xxiii., 45.
The earth did quake, and the rocks rent.—MATT., xxvii., 51.

SCIENCE is teaching us to-day about the vitality of the universe. Everything which we call dead is quivering with life, the stones under our feet as well as the stars over our heads. The beasts and hills, the streams and fields, are all alive; all are instinct with the vitality of God. What then? As the best truths which science teaches are always making way for the higher truths of religion and the spiritual life, shall not this truth of the life of the dead world prepare us for the story of the Crucifixion? If all is alive, and all life is one, and Christ's is the most perfect life that the world ever saw, is it then strange that the awful experience of that perfect, central Life should be felt in terror and disturbance and perplexed hope through all the structure of the globe? Shall He who is The Life shudder and fall in death, and the great robes of the lesser life, which are the garment that He wears, not sway and tremble with the agitation?

This is the meaning of the darkness and the earthquake—what shall they mean to us ?

First, they must lend their emphasis to the infinite, mysterious importance of the Tragedy. If it ever lose its greatness in our eyes, if the things immediately about us ever shut it out of our sight, let the tribute of nature, the awe of the darkened sky and the terror of the bursting rocks, recall to us the greatness, the fearfulness, the power of the death of Christ. But, besides that, let it teach us always of the liveness of the earth. It is no dead, burnt-out cinder on whose breast we live. It is a live earth, registering in its vital changes all that men do, sympathetic, tremulous with vitality, a world to honor and to reverence and to love, not to despise nor to disgrace, an earth for noble men to live noble lives upon, an earth which, being itself full of the lower inspirations of the life of God, must have true help to give to all those higher inspirations of His life which are in man. What can we say more than St. Paul has said—a creation groaning and travailing, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God ? . . .

There is another incident which is recorded only by St. Matthew. He declares that, when Jesus died, " Many bodies of saints which had slept arose

and came out of the graves, after His resurrection, and appeared unto many." The story is told in connection with Christ's death, though it is not till after His resurrection that the wonder is said to have occurred.

To us, at least, it is the spiritual meaning of the event that is of chief value. To the disciples there may have been other uses in it which we do not know. To us it offers a picture of the way in which the death of Christ—the supreme self-offering of Man to God—reached out and claimed for itself and filled with life and unity all the devotion and piety and earnest struggle after goodness which was or ever had been anywhere upon the earth in all the history of man. . . .

Life given to good efforts of human nature that seemed dead, and unity given to solitary efforts of human nature that seemed hopelessly estranged—is not that the meaning of this one of the events of the Crucifixion? Sometimes the absorbing interest and value of the death of Christ has seemed to make worthless the good works of men who lived outside of its immediate and conscious influence—is not its proper and legitimate power just the reverse? Does it not claim in its true quality, and unite with every other righteous deed of man, the darkest and

slightest and remotest of all the struggles of the human soul to obey God? Stand by the Cross, and catch its spirit, and the saints which sleep shall rise and come to you,—not merely your own dear dead, not merely those whom you have known to be true servants of the Lord according to their light, but all who, anywhere, in any age, have tried to do right and not wrong, to do good and not evil, and to find God. They shall all arise and come; they shall appear to you; they shall speak to you and tell you of the pains and joys of their struggle; and, knowing at last in Christ the Source of all their hitherto unknown strength, they shall bid you believe in Him and be strong. . . .

Behold, then, the centralness of the Cross! There is no need of man which the Cross, thoroughly known and believed in, cannot abundantly supply.

It will do its work for the world as the world shall become ready for it. Not yet! Not all at once, but slowly, steadily, the Cross and all it means—God's Love made manifest in and to obedient man—slowly, steadily, it shall occupy the world and prove itself the master-power of human life.

But it may become the master-power of *our* lives now. For us the rocks may move, and the dead awake to life, and God be infinitely near instead of

so terribly far away. We may talk with the Saints of all ages, and feed our faith from theirs. Into our souls may come the power of the Crucified, making us know that Jesus is the Son of God.

When ?

Now!

O dying Christ! wilt Thou not fill us with Thy life! Wilt Thou not make us know that to try to live outside the power of Thy death is death indeed!

Behold, we try to give ourselves to Thee! Wilt Thou not take us entirely—entirely—and make us henceforth to be not our own, but Thine who didst die for us!

Inmost heaven its radiance pours
Round thy windows, at thy doors,
Asking but to be let in,
Waiting to flood out thy sin,
Offering thee unfailing health,
Love's refreshment, boundless wealth ;
Voices at thy life's gate say,
"Be immortal, Soul, *To-day !*"

Blessed Lord Jesus, Who camest to destroy the works of the devil, and to make us heirs of everlasting life, grant us grace to live so near to Thee every day in the path of duty that we may begin the Heavenly life here, which shall be ours for ever hereafter. Amen.

Wednesday in Holy Week.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.—MATT., xxvii., 45.

WE can imagine that a joy came to the heart of Jesus when the darkness fell upon the earth. No longer did the blank, unsympathetic landscape stare Him in the face. His soul delighted and was soothed when the darkened world entered into His struggle. And so there is, I am sure, with all His wish to see us happy, a satisfaction in the heart of Christ when any soul, out of its first careless, easy indifference about Him and His suffering, passes into the darkness. He rejoices in its temporary eclipse because He knows that it promises a brighter and more permanent spiritual light to come. He is glad for you, if your troubled soul is really feeling the darkness of the Cross, because He means to lead you through the Cross's darkness to the Cross's light. . . .

The Shame of Sin and the Bewilderment of

Struggle—these are the elements that make the darkness which falls upon a human soul when it is really taken possession of by the Cross of Christ. It is like the darkness that was over all the earth from the sixth hour to the ninth hour. The earth knew that that darkness was no ordinary night. . . . It was the sign of a terrible woe, and yet it was the token of a glorious promise. The common nights seemed commonplace beside this noonday darkness. And so your heart has known many darknesses. You have been discouraged and disappointed and depressed very often. You have been frightened at the immensity of life; you have been wearied with the littleness of life. You have been haunted by persecutions, saddened by ingratitude, vexed by misconception, and angered because men would not honor you as you deserved. All those darknesses have come to you. They have come and gone. They have been to you like the night which you knew would pass away and leave you as it found you. But when you come into the power of the death of Christ, you feel the difference and the newness. *That* is a darkness which will not leave you as it found you. From it you cannot go out just as you went in. In it you must be regenerated and made a new man. It is all alive with power and

hope; for, at the heart of all its shame for sin there is the soul's undestroyed and indestructible value, and in the midst of its bewilderment of struggle there is an inextinguishable hope of success. The ordinary depressions and discouragements of life are forever different from that darkness in whose centre, at whose heart, hangs Christ on His cross. *They* are full of weakness. *He* throbs out strength—His own strength—through all the darkness which *He* pours around the soul.

Who does not know that there is a shame which makes weak, and there is a shame which makes strong? There is a shame with which the detected robber skulks away out of the sight of men; there is a shame with which the soldier, whose captain rushing into his deserted place has shown him his cowardice, rushes forward in his turn and sets his heroic heart between his captain and the foe. And so there is a bewilderment which turns to palsy, and there is another bewilderment which turns to faith. The shame that begets heroism and the bewilderment that turns to faith are the shame and bewilderment that issue forth from the cross of Christ. The darkness at whose heart He hangs, crucified for us, is the darkness that has in it the promise—nay, the certainty—of light.

That darkness is around you now. You are ashamed of your sin in the presence of the great Sacrifice for sin. You are in the thick of the struggle to do, not your own will but the will of God to whom Christ gave you in His sacrifice for all mankind. It would be useless to tell you that all is bright with you. It would be useless to deny that life is in some sense darker, more serious, more critical, more full of terrible issues and deeper fears, than it used to be before you felt the power of the Cross. What shall I say then? May I not say this?—be thankful for the darkness into which you have been led. If the way to the light that never shall go out must lie through darkness, be thankful for the darkness. Be thankful that the brightness of pride and carelessness have given place to the darkness of shame and struggle. Pray to God, first of all, that you may never go back into the pride where you were not ashamed of sinning, and the carelessness where you did not even *try* to sacrifice your will to God's.

And yet be sure that darkness is not the End, that beyond it lies light, that to bring you out into light is the purpose for which alone God brings you, or permits you to be brought into darkness:

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son,

In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

O God of hope, the true Light of faithful souls, and perfect Brightness of the blessed, Who art verily the Light of Thy Church, grant that my heart may both render Thee a worthy prayer, and always glorify Thee with the offering of praises: Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday in Holy Week.

I am the living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat?—JOHN, vi., 51, 52.

NOTICE how Christ answers this doubting question: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." What does it mean but this—that you cannot know how it is done except by doing it? It may seem strange, but it is no new law. It is a law which runs through all life in application to the highest things. I cannot tell you how to meet sorrow; you must do it. So only can you learn how to do it. "How can I," cries the poor, bereaved heart, sitting in the darkened room alone, "How can I live my dreary life alone?" "Go on and live it," is the answer. And as he goes on it is not dreary, and he can live it bravely in Christ's strength. "How can I eat His flesh?" "Except you do you

have no life." It seems hard and unreasonable, this inexorable demand for the unintelligible and impossible; but it is only the principle of all experimental truth; that in no other way than by experience can it be learned. It seems to involve a contradiction, but yet it is the method of much of the very best progress that we make and we all act upon it constantly:

> "You must love Him, ere to you
> He shall seem worthy of your love."

The general spirit of the figure is clear; it means support or strength. That is the idea of food. Only, food means a certain kind of strength; it is strength in a man, not strength without a man. It is strength incorporated, and not strength applied. . . . To feed on Christ, then, is to get His strength into us to be our strength. You feed on the cornfield, and the strength of the cornfield comes into you and is your strength. You feed on the cornfield and then go and build your house, and it is the cornfield in your strong arm that builds the house, that cuts down the trees, and piles the stone, and lifts the roof into its place. You feed on Christ and then go and live your life, and it is Christ in you that lives your life, that helps the poor, that

tells the truth, that fights the battle, and that wins the crown.

But what is this strength of Christ that comes into us? There can be but one answer. It is His character. It is the moral qualities of His nature that are to enter into us and be ours until we are His. This is His strength—His purity, His truth, His mercifulness,—in one word, His holiness, the perfectness of His moral life. . . . This is the strength of which we eat, and which, like true food, enters into us and becomes truly ours while it is still His.

And this brings us to the understanding of that word "flesh." We are to eat His flesh. Now, the flesh was the expression of the human life of Jesus. It was in His incarnation that He became capable of uttering those qualities in which man might be like Him, which men might receive from Him and take into themselves. Think of it. God had stood before men from the first, and they had looked with awe and adoration upon Him, throned far above them. . . . What was there in the Deity that could repeat itself in man? Not His majesty, not omnipotence and omniscience, surely. . . . Then came the Incarnation. Here was God in the flesh. Solemnly that of the Divine

which was capable of being wrapped in and of living through the human, was brought close within that wondrous life lived in a human body. There was the God we were to imitate, to grow like to, to take into ourselves until He filled us with Himself. It was the incarnate God; it was the God in the flesh that was to enter into man. This was the flesh which we were to eat, and by which we were to live. . . .

This giving of His own flesh for our food is always spoken of in connection with the great Sacrifice of the flesh in which He gave it for us. There is always this association between the reception of the strength of the incarnate Christ and His crucifixion, in which He gave Himself up that He might furnish that strength to His people forever. The great Christian Sacrament, which embodies this idea—the idea of the feeding of the soul upon the flesh of Christ—is all filled full of the memories of the agony in which the flesh was offered. What does this mean? Does it not mean this,—that however man longs for His God, however man sees that in the incarnate Christ there is the God he needs and whom his nature was meant to receive, it is only when man sees that Divine Being suffering for him, only when he stands beside the Cross and beholds the love in

the agony, that his hungry nature is able to take the food it needs, that is so freely offered? The flesh must be broken before we can take it. This is what Christ says; and the history of thousands of souls has borne its witness to it, that it is the suffering Saviour, the Saviour in His suffering, that saves the soul. The suffering Saviour, inly known, and through His wounds letting out His life into the starved lives of them who hold Him fast—that is the Gospel.

Before His cross the lesson must be learned. Stand there until you are grateful through and through for such a love so marvellously shown. Let gratitude open your life to receive His Spirit; let it make you long to be like Him; let love bring Him into you so that you shall do His will because you have His heart. That entrance of His life into yours shall give you strength and nourishment such as you never knew before. Then you shall know, in growing, dependent, delighted strength, more and more every day, the answer to the old ever new question, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

How can He? Certainly He can and will if you will go to Him, and pray to Him, and love Him, and obey Him, and receive Him. And what a strength

comes of that holy feeding! Where is the task that terrifies the man who lives by Christ? Where is the discouragement over which he will not walk, to go to the right which he must reach? You may starve him, but he has this inner food. You may darken his life, but he has this inner light. You may make war about him, but he has this peace within. You may turn the world into a hell, but he carries this inner heaven safely through its fiercest fires. He is like Christ Himself; he has meat to eat that we know not of, and in the strength of it he overcomes at last, and is conqueror through his Lord.

It is possible, and may God make it real for all of us!

O Corn of Wheat, which God for us did sow
In the rough furrows of this world of woe,
That Thou the Bread of Life for us might be,
To nourish us to all eternity;
Grant us, through faith, O Christ, to feed on Thee!

O true and living Vine!
Bending so low from heaven in Thine endeavor
To give us all of Thine immortal Wine,
That we may live for ever,
Grant us, through faith, O Christ, to drink of Thee!

Lord, evermore give us this Bread; give us Thyself. Thou who in love givest Thyself to us in the Blessed Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood, grant us grace in love to receive Thee, in love to retain Thee, in love to be joined to Thee eternally. Amen.

Good Friday.

Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King?—JOHN, xix., 15.

THE shame and the exaltation! The exaltation and the shame! These two words describe the power which the sight of the crucifixion of its King must have on human nature. Just put it in the simplest way to yourself;—here are you, a man, living your human life in careless, comfortable selfishness, and to you Good Friday comes. What does it mean? Once into the centre of this same humanity came its true King,—the Man in whom humanity was perfect, perfect humanity because filled with divinity. And lo! humanity was such that its King could not live in its midst without suffering and dying. "Shall I crucify your King?" asked the Power of Evil, and no remonstrance came from the condition of humanity. *He had to die!* And if He were here by your side to-day, must He not suffer still? Must not still the ideal of what you were made to be, be tortured by the reality of what you are? There is the way

in which you crucify the Son of God afresh. There is the power, the blessed power of overwhelming shame! And yet, behold again! He is willing to be crucified! That too is manifest on Good Friday. It is terrible to need the sacrifice of such a King: it is glorious to have a King who will make such a sacrifice. There is the exaltation.

In more than one old heathen story it is the sacrifice of the King of the country that saves the sinful and plague-stricken country from its curse. The people stand and see their King go quietly forth, alone, majestic, sorrowful; never so thoroughly their King as when he thus goes to death for them. And as they stand and look their hearts are full of these two powers—exaltation and shame;—exaltation that they have a King who is willing and able to save them by his dying, shame that they are such that it is only by his dying that he can give them salvation.

So must we see our King go to His death. Oh, never does human nature seem so glorious and so wicked all at once as when we stand before the cross of Jesus! The most enthusiastic hopes, the most profound humiliation, have found their inspiration there. Down at its foot have bowed and wept the penitents who seemed to have reached the lowest depths of self-contempt and misery; out from

beneath its arms have ridden forth the knights of hope and courage for the celestial conquest of the world. The glory and disgrace of our humanity both culminate on Calvary; for there the Son of Man in agony and death gave Himself in consecrated sacrifice for the sins of men.

Oh, let us take the disgrace, my friends, but let us not fail to take the glory too! If I have my share in the sin for which my King was crucified, I have my true share also in the offering of this Humanity, which is both mine and His, which He made there. As He entered into my sin, so may I enter into His sacrifice. He was offered up there for me because I am a sinner, but I was offered up there in Him because He is my King. Let me not forget that last! The life which I live now is an offered life; long, long ago, it was presented to God and Holiness, the God of Holiness upon the cross. Therefore let me go among my temptations strong in His strength; let me be pure, brave, and unselfish; let me say to Sin, "I do not know you; I died to you in my King's death." Let me say to Goodness, "I belong to thee, for I was given to thee in the giving of my King." Let me, in St. Paul's great phrase, "know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; for to know Him and Him crucified is to

know the kingdom consecrated in the King. It is to know everything—the world, my brethren, myself, everything—to know them all as sacrificed, dedicated entirely to God; it is to know myself and all the world as not our own, but His!

The Earth was faint with battle, and she lay
With weary face and garments rolled in blood,
An exile from the presence of her God,
Through all the heat and burden of the day.
And, "Oh, that one would bring to me," she said,
"While I in anguish wait,
Of the water from the Well of Paradise,
Which is beside the gate!"

A mighty Man, full armèd for the fight,
Burst through the foemen with resistless might—
Not heeding that the angel of the gate
Did pierce Him sorely with his sword of light—
And brought unto the Earth,
What time the night fell late,
Of the water from the Well of Paradise,
Which is beside the gate.

Meekly, with covered face and bended head,
"He hath done matchless things for me," she said:
"This water do I hold for this Man's blood;
I take the cup and drink—and live to God."

O Loving Father, Who hast sent Thy Son Jesus Christ to die on the Cross for us, give us grace to see in that great offering Thy love for us, and to love Thee through Him by the power of the Holy Ghost, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Easter Even.

And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.—2 Cor., v. 15.

Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.—2 Cor., i., 10.

How does the death of Christ bring this new life? what is there in His sacrifice that sets men free from living to themselves, and makes them live to Him? I think we see it best if we look at those typical apostles. Certainly so it was with them. From the day of Christ's crucifixion any one who reads the story feels a change in them, and knows full well what is its nature. Before, they loved Him; while He was alive, they followed Him; now, their love has become their religion, and their following of Him is all their life. They are living *unto Him*. As down a hillside, with the broad sea lying at its foot, a multitude of streams run in their different channels, yet all run to the same end; so these apostles' lives are very different, yet all lived unto Christ.

Look at them, then, and you will see what it is in His death that is so powerful. Their Master's love and their Master's nature became absolutely clear to them there. . . . It was what happens when any dear and rich life is taken away from you. At first, the only consciousness is of a shock and bitter pain, which is even precious to you because it is so bound up with your love for the departed. By-and-by the sharpest pain subsides; perhaps you almost blame yourself for losing it, as if it were a sort of disloyalty; but something better takes its place. You look back on that life as a completed thing; you see the meaning of it; you are able to put its parts together and to put the whole in its place. The passionate storm of sorrow calms into the tranquil delight of thoughtful recollection. Your friend comes back to you, as it were, in your full appreciation of what he was and vivid certainty of what he is. . . .

This must have been the way in which the disciples looked back upon the death of Jesus,—never losing the sense of its sadness, but getting always a deeper knowledge of its infinite meaning. They had known much of each (their Master's love and their Master's nature) before, but now the veil seemed entirely withdrawn, and they saw both completely. They did not tell the story to themselves perhaps; they

were all stunned with grief and horror; very blindly it crept in and laid itself upon their intelligence. They went home and sat through all the dreary Sabbath, thinking perhaps that they had lost their Christ, not knowing that they had only just really found Him; but when the sunlight of the Resurrection came, it touched this new knowledge sleeping in their hearts, and in an instant ripened it to consciousness and action. "Behold, how He loved us!" and "Behold what He is!"—these were the seeds that dropped into their natures in the awful furrows that the Crucifixion made. "Come, let us serve Him," and "Come, let us copy Him,"—those were the plants of resolution that sprang up from the seeds in the rich warmth of the Resurrection.

But He died not for those disciples only: He died for all, that all might live to Him. He died for us, that we might live to Him; that we may always have our faces set that way, always be coming nearer to Him, always be serving Him with a profounder gratitude and imitating Him with a more implicit love, always be struggling towards Him till at last we shall come to Him, and be with Him forever. That is what He died for. Watching that as it goes on in us, He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

Bring your finest linen and your spice,
Swathe the sacred Dead ;
Bind with careful hands and piteous eyes
The napkin round His head :

Lay Him in the garden-rock to rest :
Rest you the Sabbath length :
The Sun that went down crimson in the west
Shall rise renewed in strength.

God Almighty shall give joy for pain,
Shall comfort him who grieves :
Lo ! He with joy shall doubtless come again,
And with Him bring His sheaves.

O Christ, Saviour of the world, insomuch as I have profited by this Lenten season, bless me ; insomuch as I have failed to use it faithfully, forgive me.

Bless unto me this coming night of holy Easter ; that in it I may truly rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

Lord and Life-giver, come and breathe upon my soul ; Thou canst lift me out of the lowest pit.

Perfect Thy strength in my weakness : and let Thy grace be sufficient for me.

Since Thou hast not taken me away in the midst of my days but upholden my soul in life, suffer not my feet to slip.

Grant me some work of Thy love to do ; and prosper it in my hands.

Let me not die until I have fulfilled Thy will ; and let me enter with joy into rest.

Neither pray I for myself alone, but for all whom Thou hast given me, or to whom my prayer may avail aught :

For all who fail to call upon Thee, and for whom no one pleads; let Thy love be their intercessor:

For all who are in any agony of anxiety, or in any distress of affliction:

For all who strive in any good work, to the glory of God and the help of men:

For all whom I love or who love me, in whatever place or circumstance:

For all whom I have hurt, or tempted, or wronged, in thought, word, or deed:

For all the souls whom I have loved, departed into Thy hand:

Lift Thou up the Light of Thy countenance upon us all, O God; and bless us with Thy continual peace.

Grant us grace to say always to Thy perfect Will: Amen and Amen.

INDEX TO POETS.

John Worden 6
B. M. 12, 239
Margaret E. Sangster 18, 121
Frances R. Havergal 23, 30, 61, 143, 219
Christina G. Rossetti 36, 213, 243
Horatius Bonar, D.D. 41, 71, 92
John G. Whittier 47, 203
Lucy Larcom 51, 193, 209, 224
Stuart Sterne 55
Frederick W. Faber, D.D. 67, 99
Eva Stuart 76
James Russell Lowell 81, 198
Susan Coolidge 86
George Herbert 104, 170
Caroline M. Noel 109
Samuel Longfellow 113
Alice Cary 125
J. L. M. W. 130
Samuel T. Coleridge 136
Anna L. Waring 148
W. M. L. Jay 154
George Macdonald 159
Julia Wood 165
Louise Mathilde 175

Sarah Doudney 180
Robert Browning } 185
James Wilson }
Dora Greenwell 189
Anna E. Hamilton 235

THE PRAYERS

Are taken or compiled from Bright's *Ancient Collects*, à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, Knox Little's *Treasury of Devotion*, Rowland Williams's *Psalms and Litanies*, Christina G. Rossetti's *Face of the Deep*, and the *Book of Common Prayer*.

107562

BV
85
B72

107562

Brooks, Phillips, Bp.
The more abundant life.

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME
JY 16 '76	

Brooks
more

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

PRINTED IN U.S.A.